
**COUNTER INSURGENCY OPERATION AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE
NORTH EAST:A STUDY OF THE NIGERIAN ARMY OPERATION HADIN KAI IN
BORNO STATE (2021-2024)**

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Abstract

This study examines the Counter -Insurgency Operations and National Security in the North-East: A Study of the Nigerian Army Operation Hadin kai in Borno State (2021-2024).The objectives of the study are to: examine the nature and characteristics of the Nigerian Army counter-Insurgency (COIN) operations in Borno State ; investigate the impact of the Nigeria Army Operation Hadin Kai in Borno State The study utilizes the qualitative research method. The qualitative research method interpreted the surrounding phenomenon in the study area via the use of Interview. The data collected in this study was analyzed by descriptive statistical tools. The study used, Securitization Theoryand Psychological Operations (PSYOP) Theory as the theoretical frame work. A sample of Four hundred (400) respondents were selected from both Maiduguri, Bama and Gwoza. The findings indicates that; COIN operations are effective to some degree, though there are concerns about their ability to fully address the root causes of insurgency. The study concludes the operations have contributed to improving security, restoring relative stability, and reducing insurgency in the region, yet concerns persist about their ability to address deeper, underlying issues such as poverty, unemployment, and ideological extremism, which continue to fuel the insurgency. On the basis of the conclusion, the study recommended amongst others that there is a need for greater transparency in military operations. Regular updates on progress, objectives, and outcomes should be communicated to the public, especially to local communities that are directly affected by the insurgency and to ensure lasting peace, the government should focus on addressing the root causes of insurgency, such as poverty,

Keywords: Counter Insurgency, National Security, Operation Hadin Kai

Introduction

The Boko Haram insurgency began in 2009 and has resulted in over 350,000 deaths and the displacement of more than 3 million people Operation Lafiya Dole, launched in 2015, achieved

some military gains but was criticized for weak civil-military relations and limited humanitarian coordination. Operation Hadin Kai was introduced to address these gaps by pursuing three strategic goals: to degrade and defeat terrorist networks, to strengthen civil-military cooperation, and to stabilize conflict-affected communities for safe return and resettlement (Nigerian Army Headquarters. (UN OCHA, 2023). When the insurgency became widespread across the North-East, the need to improve military capability by generating more troops and equipment to cover new areas and rotate troops that have overstayed became very apparent. Thus in 2013, the Nigeria Army introduced the generation of Task Force Units (TFUs) in an attempt to increase the number of units deployed in the operation (Alao 2012).

Operation Hadin Kai (OHK), which translates to "Operation Cooperation" in Hausa, is a military campaign launched by the Nigerian Armed Forces in April 2021. It replaced Operation Lafiya Dole and aims to intensify the fight against insurgency in Nigeria's North-East region, where Boko Haram and its offshoot, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), have remained persistent threats (Nigerian Army Headquarters, 2021). The operation reflects a more coordinated and civilian-sensitive approach to counterterrorism aimed at restoring peace and stability.

Operation Hadin Kai uses a joint-task force strategy involving the Nigerian Army, Navy, Air Force, and other paramilitary agencies. The operation is intelligence-driven and features coordinated ground and aerial assaults, search-and-rescue missions, and community engagement (Crisis Group, 2022). Importantly, Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) initiatives such as medical outreaches, peace dialogues, and humanitarian support play a vital role in building local trust.

The military operations in Northeast Nigeria have indeed undergone name changes over time, reflecting shifts in focus or strategy in addressing the insurgency and promoting peace in the region. Operation Zaman Lafiya (2013–2015): *Zaman Lafiya*, meaning "Living in Peace" in Hausa, emphasized restoring peace and order during the early phases of the Counter insurgency against Boko haram insurgent. It marked a phase where the military concentrated on defending key territories and stabilizing affected areas. Operation *Lafiya Dole* (2015–2021): This name, translating to "Peace by Force," signified a more aggressive approach to the Counter-Insurgency (COIN) operations in the North East. It reflected a commitment to reclaiming territories controlled by insurgents and a firm resolve to end the crisis through military might. Operation *Hadin Kai* (2021-Present): The term *Hadin Kai*, meaning "cooperation" or "unity," underscores the importance of collaboration among stakeholders, including local communities, regional forces,

and international allies, to achieve lasting peace and stability. This rebranding aligns with the broader goals of winning hearts and minds, fostering unity, and addressing the root causes of the conflict. Each transition in nomenclature not only reflects tactical or operational shifts but also attempts to resonate with the affected communities, signaling evolving priorities in the counter-insurgency efforts.

Statement of the Research Problem

Boko haram insurgency has remained a threat in the security architecture in Nigeria, seriously affecting the northeast east Nigeria. Since its beginning in 2009, the sect has evolved from West Africa, leading to the emergence of another faction, the Islamic State of West Africa (ISWAP). The period 2021-2024 was witnessed by significant developments, such as leadership changes, evolving tactics, increasing military operations, and a lucid alliance among insurgents. Dispute sustained Counter insurgency effects by the Nigerian military regimental forces (MNJTF) and international actors, since NGO's and others, Boko haram and ISWAP continue to pose a significant threat to National security and governance.

The military's inability to maintain a sustained presence in liberated areas has allowed insurgents to regroup and reoccupy strategic territories, further undermining the effectiveness of Operation *Hadin Kai*. These operational shortcomings have raised serious concerns about the sustainability and strategic coherence of Nigeria's counter-insurgency efforts, especially in relation to achieving lasting peace and national security in the North-East (ICG, 2022; Ugwueze & Aniche, 2020). It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the extent to which Operation *Hadin Kai* has addressed the challenges of insurgency in Borno State between 2021 and 2024, and to explore why military responses alone may not be sufficient in resolving the region's complex security crisis.

Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to investigate the impact of the Nigerian Army (COIN) Operations in the North-East on Nigeria's national security. Thus, the study intends to achieve this through the following specific objectives:

- i. To examine the nature and characteristic of the Nigerian Army Counter-Insurgency operations in Borno state.
- ii. To investigate the impact of the Nigeria Army Counter-Insurgency Operations in Borno state.

Literature Review

Concept of Insurgency

Insurgency is a condition of violent revolt against constituted authority or established leadership through sabotage and harassment in order to undermine its authority. In other words, insurgency becomes latent when a group of persons uses violent methods to resist the enforcement of the law, or the group opposes the running of organized governance through bloody violence and insurrection. In the Nigerian constitutional context, an insurgency is defined within the active framework and physical activities of the following; an attack on defenseless civilians resulting in the massive loss of lives and properties; prevention of the flourishing domestic and foreign investments and investors and its linkages to murder, genocide and indeed, treasonable felony (Okene and Olawale, 2013).

Concept of Counterinsurgency

. Counterinsurgency, frequently referred to by the acronym (COIN) is just the opposite of insurgency. To put it differently, it involves a combination of measures undertaken by the legitimate government of a country to curb or suppress an insurgency taken up against it. So, while insurgents for instance try to erase or overthrow the existing political authority in order to establish theirs, the counter-insurgent forces try to reinstate the existing political structures as well as reduce or annihilate the usurping authority of the insurgents (Liolio, 2013).

COIN involves all political, economic, military, paramilitary, psychological, and civic actions that can be taken by a government to defeat an insurgency. COIN operations include supporting a Host Nation's military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken to defeat an insurgency. Avoiding the creation of new insurgents and forcing existing insurgents to end their participation is vital to defeating an insurgency.

The Concept of National Security

The concept of National Security was introduced after World War II and has replaced other concepts that describe the struggle to overcome various external and internal threats (Kissinger, 2002). During the era of the cold war, National Security in the United States of America (USA) and former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) were defined in excessively narrow

military terms. This reduced the concept of National Security to purely military dominated thoughts (Kissinger, 2002).

In this context, Edward Lippman argues that National Security is the ability of a nation to maintain its core values and avoid war, and if challenged, its ability to maintain such core values by victories of war (Lippman, 2006). This assertion aptly captures the militarization of the concept of National Security. Giacomo Giammatteo deviating with limited security horizon defines National Security as the "ability to withstand aggression from abroad" (Giacomo, 2003). By his proposition, National Security could only be threatened from external sources and by extension, through military oriented threats. In his abstraction, John Mroz viewed security as "the relative freedom from harmful threats" (Mroz, 2007). While Lawrence Martin taking present security situation as guaranteed, defines security as the "assurance of future well-being" (Lawrence, 2011).

Nature and Characteristic of the Nigerian Army Counter-Insurgency Operation

In the fight against *Boko-Haram* insurgency, the Nigerian government uses the military in different operations. In each of the operations, the military has played diverse role. From 2013 to 2023, we had four different military operations; namely: Operation *Boyona*, Operation *Zaman Lafiya*, Operation *Lafiya Dole*, and Operation *Hadin Kai*. On May 14, 2013, the Nigerian government declared a state of emergency in the three worst-affected states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe, and expanded the JTF operations into Operation *Boyona*. The creation of *Boyona* is in line with the plans laid out for the conduct of the operations to execute the mandate spelt out in the State of Emergency declaration by the President Goodluck Jonathan (Ibeh, 2013).

Borno, Yobe, Nasarawa and Adamawa Operation. BOYONA was initially conceived to deal with the deteriorating security situation in these states but was retained for the operation in the 3 states affected by the emergency rule (Osakwe and Audu, 2017). One of the operational mandates of the president to Defence Headquarters under operation *Boyona* was to destroy terrorist camps/bases, fish out perpetrators and bring them to justice. The mandate was substantially achieved with the destruction of terrorists' strongholds and bases mostly located in the desert borders of Chad and Niger Republics. Some of the destroyed/secured camps included: *Krenoa*, *Hausari*, *Marte*, *Chikun* and *Gudu* in Northern Borno. The biggest camp of the *Boko Haram* located in the dreaded Sambisa forest in Southern part of Borno State was cordoned by Special Forces (Abdul, 2013).

Operation *BOYONA* was later renamed Operation *Zaman Lafiya* with the establishment of the 7 Division in August 2013. The JTF operation *Zaman Lafiya* was organized and structured in the

form of close support Command. Although this does not provide for unity of Command, it however provided for control of the mission area by mutual cooperation and coordination between the services. The Logistic Support situations in operation *Zaman Lafiya* was far from ideal. The Army component of the JTF, which had been in the mission area since 2011, lacked almost all logistic items (Ogbazino, 2015). These operations have recorded some successes in terms of arrest of *Boko Haram* leaders, seizure and retrieval of weapons and general destruction of bases as stated earlier. These successes however, were limited compared to what should have been achieved through joint or combined operations (Osakwe and Audu, 2017).

According to Ewa (2018), the Nigerian government under President Goodluck Jonathan, no doubt, mounted a COIN operation, known as operation *Zaman Lafiya*, but it was not strong enough to check the advance of Boko-Haram. Unlike the Niger Delta COIN, in which non-military efforts have been critically used along with protective military and security operations to achieve some measure of compromise, the insurgents in the northeast had always remained adamant to any overtures for negotiation. They have been most unidentifiable, elusive, and intransigent, making bunkum and risky any moves for dialogue. As a result of this, COIN in the northeast has been driven mainly by military and security operations.

The control of about 21,545 of Nigerian territory in 2014 by *Boko-Haram* from zero ground in 2009 meant, that Operation *Zaman Lafiya* was a failure. In response to the groundswell of public criticism of the performance of the operation, Muhammadu Buhari, on assumption of office as Nigeria's elected president in May, 2015, quickly made modifications within the military, dismantled operation *Zaman Lafiya*, and put in motion the present COIN operation, code-named Operation *Lafiya Dole*, under the command of Lt. General Tukur Buratai. Within three months – October to December, 2015 the operation, marked by a consolidation of efforts from the military, the Department of State Services, Nigeria Police, and other security agencies, and military cooperation from neighboring countries through the Multinational Task Force, had given a good account of itself. In what can be seen as a blitzkrieg in the history of Nigerian warfare, Boko-Haram was effectively pushed out of all its bases within the Nigerian territory. At 1:30 p.m., Thursday, 22 December, 2016 *Operation Lafiya Dole* reached its highest point with the capture of Camp Zero in Sambisa Forest, the last fortress and hideout of the routed insurgents (Ewa, 2016:46). However, the fall of Camp Zero is not the end of insurgency in the northeast of Nigeria. While the Nigerian Air Force is continuing with its search, locate, and destroy (SLD) operations against the

insurgents, other armed forces and security operatives are working hard to contain sporadic suicide bombing and violence sponsored by *Boko-Haram* (Ewa, 2018).

Meanwhile, the new Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lieutenant General Ibrahim Attahiru approved the renaming of the ongoing Counterinsurgency Operation in the North East from Operation *Lafiya Dole* (OPLD) to Operation *Hadin Kai* (OPHK),” on 30 April 2021. The Nigeria’s Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK), the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and Operation Emergence-4 Maroua in Cameroun are changing strategies against *Boko haram* and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) terrorists. It was also revealed that relative peace has been restored in Borno State and its surroundings amidst the ongoing security challenges in the North East (Legislative Vibes, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

This research effort would attempt to anchor its analysis within the frameworks of the Securitization Theory and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) Theory.

Securitization Theory

Securitization Theory, developed by scholars of the Copenhagen School especially Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan argues that security is not an objective condition, but rather a socially constructed process in which political actors frame issues as existential threats requiring extraordinary measures (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). Central to this theory is the concept of the "speech act," where the mere act of declaring something a threat is sufficient to begin the securitization process (Wæver, 1995). The use of the Securitization Theory from the Copenhagen School increased during the 2000s in international security studies, where the theoretical framework of the School represented a critical turning point. However, although the new theoretical approach offers the possibility of addressing contemporary themes in the security agenda, securitization theory has been, and continues to be, heavily criticized even after over 25 years since its introduction. The theory explains the process by which a theme to enter a country's security agenda and has become a reference point in international security studies

In this context, the securitizing actor, typically a state official or government institution, identifies a referent object such as the state, public health, national identity, or the environment as being under threat (Balzacq, 2011). For securitization to be effective, the audience (usually the public or relevant stakeholders) must accept this claim, thereby legitimizing the use of extraordinary measures, such as emergency laws, military action, or surveillance, which would not be acceptable under normal political conditions (Buzan et al., 1998).

Securitization Theory primarily involves hypothetical and counterfactual arguments about future alternatives. The statements always include two predictions: what will happen if securitizing action are not taken, and what will happen if they are. Research on securitization is qualitative in nature, involving the analysis of three stages: nonpoliticized, politicized and securitized. In addition, its development requires (i) identifying the securitizing agent and the discourse they use to socially construct the threat; (ii) analyzing the capacity of this discourse to convince a specific audience of the risks of the threat; and (iii) studying the emergency policies and actions that states adopt to confront the threat. In other words, empirical evidence of securitization involves an analytical roadmap that demands, from the researcher's perspective, a focus on securitizing discourses and their ability to convince an audience of the need to adopt emergency measures.

The theory also highlights five sectors of security: military, political, economic, societal, and environmental, each addressing different types of threats to different referent objects (Buzan et al., 1998). For instance, in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. government framed terrorism as an existential threat to national security, resulting in the War on Terror and the implementation of measures such as the Patriot Act and the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq (Jackson, 2005).

However, the theory has been criticized for its elite-centric focus, emphasizing top-down discourse while neglecting grassroots or local interpretations of security (Balzacq, 2011). Additionally, scholars argue that it reflects a Eurocentric worldview and risks justifying authoritarian practices by framing normal political issues as urgent security concerns (Howell & Richter-Montpetit, 2020; Aradau, 2004).

Psychological Operations (PSYOP) Theory

Put simply, war can be interpreted as a battle between two parties by using weapons. Based on historical records, the war between two parties more often uses weapons in the form of firearms and sharp weapons that aim to fight the enemy physically. In its development, weapons used in warfare are not limited only to physically weaken the enemy, but also those that are capable of attacking the enemy's mind, morality, motivation, ideology, and behavior (Walzer, 2004; Gertz, 2014). These weapons are the product of an operation called psychological operations or psychological warfare. It was revealed by William E. Daugherty (Daugherty, 1976) that "Psychological Operations (PSYOP) has been used to some extent in almost every type of conflict since the biblical era during wartime and peacetime aimed at influencing emotions, motives, and

reasoning and behavior of target audience in supporting the achievement of national aims and objectives" (Bemis, 2011). The concept used is to attack the enemy's psyche of which firearms and sharp weapons cannot do (Zhivejnov, 1966; Pollock, 1976; Goldstein & Findley, 1996). The term psychological operation was first used in the 1945s. Previously, it was known as psychological warfare, which first appeared in the 1920s. J.F.C Fuller, a military analyst, and historian coined the term of psychological warfare (Daugherty, 1976).

According to him, warfare will traditionally be replaced with psychological warfare as warfare no longer uses weapons or battlefields, but through cheat thinking, fooling, and the destruction of the moral and spiritual life of a country caused by the influence of other parties. Psychological operation is a term that has long been used to describe the use of media and messages chosen by American soldiers to influence targets. In general, psychological operations can be defined as the planned use of information to influence human attitudes and behavior to create behaviors, emotions, and attitudes that support the goals of the state (Narula, 2004).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employs a mixed-methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This design was chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of the nature, strategies, impact, and challenges of the Nigerian Army's Operation *Hadin Kai* in Borno State. The qualitative aspect involves the analysis of interviews, while the quantitative aspect focuses on data collected through structured questionnaires.

Population of the Study

The population for this study consists of 1, 592,200 individuals residing in Maiduguri, Gwoza, and Bama Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Borno State, North-East Nigeria. These areas have been significantly affected by insurgency and are the focus of Operation *Hadin Kai*, a military operation aimed at combating insurgency in the region. The population includes both civilians and military personnel who have been directly or indirectly impacted by the ongoing conflict, as well as local government officials, community leaders, and other stakeholders involved in or affected by the efforts of Operation *Hadin Kai*.

Sampling and Sampling Technique

The sample for this study were drawn from the three selected LGAs: Maiduguri, Gwoza, and Bama. The impact of Boko Haram insurgency has been particularly devastating in Bama, Gwoza, and

Maiduguri compared to other Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Borno State. Bama was one of the worst-affected areas, with nearly 85% of its infrastructure destroyed and the majority of its population displaced following Boko Haram’s occupation in 2014 (IOM, 2016). Gwoza, similarly, suffered intense violence and was even declared the headquarters of Boko Haram’s self-proclaimed caliphate, leading to widespread killings, forced displacements, and the destruction of religious and public institutions (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Maiduguri, although never fully captured, experienced relentless suicide bombings, targeted attacks, and became overwhelmed by a massive influx of internally displaced persons, putting enormous pressure on its resources and infrastructure (UNOCHA, 2020). The strategic and symbolic importance of Bama, Gwoza, and Maiduguri made them epicenters of conflict and humanitarian crisis in the region.

Purposive or Judgment Sampling was used to ensure representation from different subgroups within the population, such as civilians, local government officials, community leaders, and military personnel and aid workers from these locations because they possess firsthand experience and valuable insights that are critical to understanding the depth and nature of the conflict's impact

Sample Size of the study

The sample size was determined based on the total population in these areas, ensuring that it is sufficiently large to allow for meaningful analysis while considering constraints such as time, resources, and accessibility to participants in conflict-affected areas. The other sample will include individuals who are willing to participate in the study, with considerations for ethical guidelines and safety measures due to the security challenges in the region.

Table 3.1: Population and Sample Distribution

LGA	Population (N)	Proportional Allocation of Sample Size (n)
Maiduguri	791,200	199
Bama	395,800	99
Gwoza	405,200	102
Total	1,592,200	400

Source; Field Survey 2024

The determination of sample size was based on Taro Yamane (1967), which states that in a finite population, when the original sample collected is more than 5% of the population size, the

corrected sample size is determined by using Yamane's formula. Below is the mathematical illustration;

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

Where

n=Signifies the intended sample size

N=Signifies the population under study

e=Signifies the margin error

Therefore;

$$n = \frac{1,592,200}{1 + 1,592,200(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1,592,200}{1 + 1,592,200 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = 400$$

To mitigate the potential issue of a low response rate during data collection, the sample size was increased by 5%, resulting in the administration of 420 questionnaires. This approach is consistent with Yahaya (2022), who suggests that the sample size should be increased by 5% to address the possibility of low response rates.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection is conducted using both structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Structured questionnaires, containing both closed and open-ended questions, are administered to military personnel, civilians, and policymakers to collect quantitative data relevant to the study's objectives. Additionally, semi-structured interviews are conducted with key informants, including military personnel, CJTF, and Journalists, to obtain qualitative insights into the challenges and strategies of Operation *Hadin Kai*.

Secondary data is obtained from official documents, reports, and publications by the Nigerian Army, NGOs, and academic institutions. These include records of insurgency attacks, military operations, and policy documents related to counter-insurgency.

DATA PRESENTATION

This section presents the respondents' demographic profile, including gender, age, educational qualification, marital status, occupation, family size, Demographic Category, Occupation, Length of stay in Borno State, household, and Income level. It was designed to determine which category each respondent belongs.

Table 3.2: Number of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) Conducted

Category	Number of KIIs
Military Personnel	3 (One in Bama, Gwoza and Maiduguri)
CJTF	3 (One in Bama, Gwoza and Maiduguri)
Journalist	3 (One in Bama, Gwoza and Maiduguri)
Radio Hadin Kai Head of Presentation	3
Total	12

Table 3.2 presents the number of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted across Bama, Gwoza, and Maiduguri with four key categories of stakeholders: military personnel, members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), journalists, and the Head of Presentation at Radio Hadin Kai. A total of 12 interviews were conducted, with each category represented equally across the three locations.

Data Presentation Technique

Data analysis involves a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data from questionnaires is analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques with the assistance of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means, are used alongside inferential statistics. Qualitative data from interviews and document reviews is analyzed thematically.

Nature and Characteristics of the Nigerian Army Counter-Insurgency (COIN) Operations in Borno State (n = 400)

Question	Response Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Are you familiar with the Nigerian Army's COIN operations in Borno State?	Yes	290	72.5%
	No	110	27.5%
	Total	400	100.0%
How would you describe the nature of the COIN operations?	Offensive	182	45.5%
	Defensive	109	27.2%
	Humanitarian	87	21.8%
	Harsh	22	5.5%
	Total	400	100.0%
To what extent do you think the COIN operations address the root causes of insurgency?	Very effectively	146	36.5%
	Somewhat effectively	160	40.0%
	Not effectively	73	18.2%
	Not sure	21	5.3%
	Total	400	100.0%
How often do you observe the presence of COIN operations in your area?	Frequently	131	32.7%
	Occasionally	182	45.5%
	Rarely	58	14.5%
	Never	29	7.3%
	Total	400	100.0%
How satisfied are you with the transparency of COIN operations in Borno State?	Very satisfied	109	27.3%
	Moderately satisfied	131	32.7%
	Slightly satisfied	87	21.8%
	Not satisfied	73	18.2%
	Total	400	100.0%

Source; Field Survey 2024

Table above presents the respondents' perspectives on the nature and characteristics of the Nigerian Army's counter-insurgency (COIN) operations in Borno State. A significant majority, 72.5%, of

respondents are familiar with the Nigerian Army's COIN operations, while 27.5% indicate unfamiliarity. This high level of awareness underscores the visibility and relevance of these operations in the region.

Regarding the nature of COIN operations, 45.5% of respondents describe them as offensive, reflecting an active military approach to countering insurgents. Defensive strategies account for 27.2%, while humanitarian activities represent 21.8%, suggesting that COIN operations encompass a multifaceted approach. However, 5.5% of respondents perceive these operations as harsh, indicating some negative experiences or perspectives among the local population.

In terms of addressing the root causes of insurgency, 36.5% of respondents believe that COIN operations are very effective, while 40.0% view them as somewhat effective. A notable 18.2% consider the operations ineffective in addressing root causes, and 5.3% are unsure. These responses highlight mixed perceptions regarding the strategic focus and long-term impact of the COIN efforts.

The frequency of COIN operations in respondents' areas varies, with 32.7% observing their presence frequently and 45.5% occasionally. Those who rarely or never observe COIN activities constitute 14.5% and 7.3%, respectively. These findings suggest that while COIN operations are widespread, their visibility and presence may not be consistent across all areas.

Satisfaction with the transparency of COIN operations is moderate, with 27.3% of respondents being very satisfied and 32.7% moderately satisfied. Slight dissatisfaction is expressed by 21.8% of respondents, while 18.2% are not satisfied at all. These results indicate room for improvement in the perceived openness and accountability of COIN operations.

In summary, the data highlights a high level of public familiarity with COIN operations and a general perception of their offensiveness, with varying degrees of effectiveness in addressing insurgency's root causes. While the operations are generally visible, their transparency and approach leave some room for improvement in aligning with local expectations and needs.

Collaborating the above quantitative finding is the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted on 5th December 2024 at exact 11:00am with Nigeria Army officials in Gwoza LGA who refuse to disclose their identity's stated that:

I have been serving in the Nigerian Army for over 12 years, with most of my experience concentrated in the North-East, particularly Borno State. I've been

directly involved in Operation Hadin Kai since its inception. My role primarily focuses on coordinating intelligence and overseeing tactical operations aimed at neutralizing insurgent threats.

Similarly, are the interviews with CJTF Members who stated that:

I've been part of the Civilian Joint Task Force for over five years now. My role has mainly been in intelligence gathering and local community mobilization in Maiduguri and surrounding areas. We work closely with the Nigerian Army to provide information and assist in maintaining security.

I have been working with the CJTF for about four years now, and I assist in securing our communities by keeping watch for insurgent activities and reporting them to the military. We also help with evacuating civilians from potentially dangerous areas.

...I've been part of the CJTF for three years. My main responsibility is providing security in vulnerable communities and helping to monitor insurgent movements. We also assist in distributing information about military operations to civilians to ensure they are informed.

Also, a journalist in Maiduguri Abdullahi Mustapha the Manager Radio Haadin Kai conducted on 16nd December 2024 at exact 2:00Pm stated that:

I have been a journalist for over 15 years, covering security and conflict issues in Nigeria. I've reported extensively on the insurgency in the North-East, and I've covered Operation Hadin Kai from both the military and civilian perspectives.

Impact of the Nigerian Army Operation Hadin Kai in Borno State (n = 400)

Question	Response Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
How would you rate the overall impact of Operation <i>Hadin Kai</i> on security in Borno State?	Very impactful	218	54.5%
	Moderately impactful	109	27.3%
	Slightly impactful	51	12.7%
	Not impactful	22	5.5%
	Total	400	100.0%
What aspects of Operation <i>Hadin Kai</i> have had the most significant impact?	Reduction in insurgency attacks	254	63.5%
	Improved community relations	88	22.0%
	Enhanced military presence	58	14.5%
	Total	400	100.0%
Has Operation <i>Hadin Kai</i> contributed to the restoration of peace and normalcy?	Yes, significantly	146	36.4%
	Yes, but moderately	160	40.0%
	No, not much	58	14.5%
	No, not at all	36	9.1%
	Total	400	100.0%
How would you assess the economic recovery in areas impacted by Operation <i>Hadin Kai</i>?	Significant recovery	135	33.7%
	Moderate recovery	146	36.5%
	Minimal recovery	74	18.5%
	No recovery	45	11.3%
	Total	400	100.0%

Question	Response Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do you believe the success of Operation <i>Hadin Kai</i> is sustainable?	Yes, definitely	182	45.5%
	Yes, but with challenges	131	32.7%
	No, not sustainable	51	12.7%
	Not sure	36	9.1%
	Total	400	100.0%

Source; Field Survey 2024

Table above examines the overall impact of Operation *Hadin Kai* on security, peace restoration, economic recovery, and the sustainability of its success in Borno State. The data presented in this table reflects the general perception of the local population regarding the effectiveness and outcomes of the military *operation*. Regarding the overall impact of the operation on security, a majority of respondents (54.5%) rated it as very impactful, while 27.3% found it moderately impactful. A smaller proportion, 12.7%, considered it slightly impactful, and 5.5% believed it had no impact. This indicates that the operation has generally been perceived as a positive force in enhancing security.

The aspects of the operation that have had the most significant impact are the reduction in insurgency attacks, noted by 63.5% of respondents, followed by improved community relations (22.0%) and enhanced military presence (14.5%). These findings underscore the operation's effectiveness in mitigating violence while fostering better relationships with local communities.

In terms of peace and normalcy restoration, 36.4% of respondents reported significant contributions by the operation, while 40.0% acknowledged moderate contributions. However, 14.5% perceived minimal contributions, and 9.1% believed there had been no contributions at all. This variation reflects differing experiences and expectations regarding the operation's ability to stabilize the region.

The economic recovery in areas impacted by Operation *Hadin Kai* has been mixed, with 33.7% of respondents noting significant recovery and 36.5% reporting moderate recovery. Conversely, 18.5% observed minimal recovery, and 11.3% felt there had been no recovery. These responses

suggest that while progress has been made, economic revival in conflict-affected areas remains a challenge.

Finally, the sustainability of the operation's success is a topic of cautious optimism. About 45.5% of respondents believed the success is sustainable, while 32.7% agreed but anticipated challenges. Meanwhile, 12.7% viewed the success as unsustainable, and 9.1% were unsure. These sentiments highlight the importance of addressing underlying issues and ensuring long-term commitment to peace building and development initiatives.

Overall, Operation *Hadin Kai* has made notable strides in improving security and reducing insurgency in Borno State. However, sustained efforts are necessary to ensure the operation's success translates into lasting peace, economic recovery, and strengthened community resilience. Supporting the above quantitative findings are the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted with Nigerian Army officials, 5th December 2024 at exact 09:00am with Nigeria Army officials in Maiduguri Metropolitan council who also refuse to disclose their identity's stated that:

...the counter-insurgency operations in Borno State are multi-faceted, combining military strikes with intelligence gathering and community engagement. The operations aim to disrupt insurgent activities while ensuring that civilians are protected. The primary tactics include targeted airstrikes, ground patrols, and engaging in peace building with local communities. The main objective is to neutralize insurgent forces while winning hearts and minds.

Likewise, are the interviews with CJTF Members who stated that:

...the operations are complex. The Army deploys a lot of manpower and technology, but a lot of the work is done on the ground by people like us, the CJTF. We provide valuable information about insurgent activities and help patrol vulnerable areas. The Nigerian Army's operations are aggressive, but they also engage in peace building efforts with the local population.

...the Nigerian Army's operations in Borno State are primarily military-based, but they also include a lot of collaboration with local people. The Army has adapted its tactics to include a stronger presence in towns and

villages, as well as more patrols in the countryside to prevent insurgents from attacking soft targets.

...the COIN operations by the Army are designed to clear insurgents from strategic areas while ensuring civilians are not caught in the crossfire. They also focus a lot on protecting vital infrastructure and ensuring that insurgents cannot easily target government facilities or military convoys.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into public perceptions of the Nigerian Army's counter-insurgency (COIN) operations in Borno State. These perceptions encompass their effectiveness, strategies, and impact on insurgency reduction. The results indicate that while a majority of respondents acknowledged the positive contributions of COIN operations, there are varying opinions on their limitations and challenges. A significant proportion of respondents affirmed the effectiveness of COIN operations in reducing insurgency. The presence of the Nigerian Army has contributed to a decline in insurgent activities, providing a sense of security to affected communities.

However, concerns remain about the inability of these operations to address root causes such as poverty, unemployment, and ideological indoctrination. Addressing these underlying issues is crucial for achieving sustainable peace. The study identified intelligence gathering and community collaboration as the most effective strategies in mitigating insurgency. Intelligence gathering enables preemptive actions against insurgent threats, while community collaboration fosters mutual trust and provides actionable intelligence. Despite these successes, challenges such as limited transparency and inconsistent community engagement were noted. The public's perception of the impact and transparency of COIN operations varied significantly. While many respondents viewed the operations as impactful, others expressed concerns about the lack of transparency and inclusiveness. Improving communication and involving local populations in decision-making processes could enhance public trust and operational effectiveness.

Key challenges identified include the limited capacity of COIN operations to address socio-economic issues and the varying levels of community involvement. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that integrates military efforts with socio-economic

interventions. Building trust with local communities through transparent communication and equitable resource distribution is essential for long-term success.

The study on the effectiveness of COIN (Counter-Insurgency) operations in Nigeria highlights a significant gap between short-term military successes and the long-term peace-building requirements necessary for sustainable stability. The majority of respondents in the study expressed the belief that COIN operations have been effective to some degree in reducing insurgency. This perception is grounded in the observable progress made by the Nigerian Army in curbing insurgent activities, improving security, and restoring relative stability to regions affected by Boko Haram insurgency and other extremist groups.

COIN operations, such as targeted military offensives, intelligence gathering, and collaboration with regional partners, have disrupted insurgent networks, dismantling their operational capabilities and limiting their ability to launch attacks. The results of these operations have allowed affected communities to experience a sense of security, enabling displaced persons to return to their homes, markets to reopen, and social systems to gradually stabilize.

Despite these visible improvements, however, the study also reveals respondents' concerns about the limited scope of COIN operations in addressing the root causes of insurgency. While military success has curtailed insurgent activities, the underlying factors that fuel extremism, including poverty, unemployment, and ideological extremism, remain largely unaddressed. Poverty and unemployment, in particular, have been cited as significant drivers of conflict. In regions where economic opportunities are scarce, young people may be more susceptible to extremist ideologies, lured by the promise of financial rewards or a sense of belonging within insurgent groups.

Conclusion

The Nigerian Army's COIN operations have made notable progress in reducing insurgency in Borno State, addressing the root causes of insurgency and enhancing military-community relations will be essential for long-term peace and stability. The study calls for greater transparency in military operations, improved communication with local communities, and a more holistic approach that integrates both military strategies and socio-economic interventions. The findings and recommendations presented in this study can serve as a valuable guide for policymakers, military leaders, and other stakeholders in refining counter-insurgency strategies and strengthening national security in the North-East of Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study makes the following policy recommendations to address the challenges of Operation *Hadin Kai*:

1. **Enhancing Transparency and Communication:** There is a need for greater transparency in military operations. Regular updates on progress, objectives, and outcomes should be communicated to the public, especially to local communities that are directly affected by the insurgency. Establishing channels for open dialogue between the military and local leaders can foster trust and encourage collaboration.
2. **Addressing Socioeconomic Drivers of Insurgency:** To ensure lasting peace, the government should focus on addressing the root causes of insurgency, such as poverty, unemployment, and marginalization. Initiatives aimed at providing education, vocational training, and economic opportunities can reduce the pool of potential recruits for insurgent groups.

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