

The Boko Haram Insurgency and Nigeria-Niger's Socio-Cultural Relations

IJSSP
44, 15/16

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Received 21 June 2024
Accepted 29 April 2024
Published 30 July 2024

Abstract

The study interrogates the Impact of the Boko Haram Insurgency on Nigeria-Niger Socio-cultural Relations. This is geared towards examining the extent to which the Boko Haram insurgency impacted Nigeria-Niger socio-cultural relations. The research adopted the Linkage theory as its framework of analysis. Data were generated from both primary and secondary sources. A questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistical analysis in the form of frequency distribution and simple percentages. The findings revealed that Boko Haram's violent attacks have devastated relationships among the people in the border towns; relationships between different groups of people have been limited by the insurgency and are more or less trivial. The study further shows that the Boko Haram insurgency has discouraged parents from enrolling their children and wards in schools and those already in schools have been withdrawn in the affected towns and border regions. Also, the study reveals that the closure of the Nigerian border against the Niger Republic as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency has narrowed down the level of contact among residents in the bordering towns of Nigeria and the Niger Republic. People were warned to keep away from border towns or they would be shot on sight. The study, therefore, recommends among others that Nigeria and the Niger Republic should adopt a perpetual joint military operation strategy as a formal modality not only as a means to restrain the Boko Haram threat thus,



International Journal of
Sociology and Social Policy
Vol. 44 No. 15/16, 2024
pp. 143-163
Emerald Publishing Limited
0144-333X

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creating a pre-emptive mechanism to checkmate irregularities and sanity of the borders thus to guarantee continues socio-cultural relations.

Keywords: Boko Haram Insurgency, Nigeria-Niger's Socio-Cultural Relations, Linkage Theory

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has been grappling with the daunting challenges posed by the Boko Haram insurgency to its socio-political and economic stability. Boko Haram attacks government establishments. The targets of its attacks have remained government institutions, security agencies, moderate Muslims, non-Muslims (thought to be responsible for social, economic and political misfortune against the northern part of Nigeria) certain clerics, churches, Christian businesses, and relaxation centres. Added to the list are media houses and tertiary institutions (Olu, 2012). The sect has killed no fewer than 9352 people since it launched an uprising in 2009. Between January and May 2012, hundreds of lives were lost to the insurgency. The group was alleged to have carried out more than 115 separate attacks in the Northern part of the country in 2011 alone (Joseph, 2015).

The exact date of Boko Haram's existence has been problematic among scholars. Nevertheless, Onuoha (2014) maintains that it was established in the early 2000s under the leadership of Muhammad Ali and later Muhammad Yusuf. Boko Haram, which means "Western education is forbidden", rejects western education, ideas and institutions. It is based on this ideology that the sect earned the name, Boko Haram. It is important to note that the sect prefers to be called by its original name, *Jama'atu Ahlisunnah Lidda'a awatil wal jihad*, meaning "people committed to the propagation of the prophet's teachings and jihad". Its core objective is to overhaul the secular Nigerian state with a regime that strictly adheres to Islamic Sharia law (Judith, 2004; Ndlovu, 2012).

The operation of Boko Haram has moved from the sphere of domestic or internal politics to the international domain. Onuoha (2014) observed that the violent upsurge of Boko Haram not only poses a serious threat to internal security in Nigeria but also threatens stability in West Africa. Boko Haram insurgency has negatively affected the relations between Nigeria and other nations of the world due to the strategies adopted by the sect such as suicide bombing, kidnapping and hostage-taking of foreigners, among others.

The foregoing demonstrates that Boko Haram has grown to become the biggest security challenge facing Nigeria, its neighbours and the entire West African sub-region. Boko Haram recruits and trains people from

countries of the Sahara-Sahel region (Onouha, 2014). In the aftermath of the July 2009 revolt, many members of the sect were alleged to have fled to North Africa to train with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI) (Onouha, 2014). Similarly, in a statement released on June 15, 2011, Boko Haram revealed its ties with the Somali-based terrorist group, Al-Shabaab (Onouha, 2014). The sect runs an international network for recruitment, training and indoctrination in the Gao and Kidal in Mali, the Diffa, Maradi and Maina Soro areas in the Niger Republic, Maroua and Garoua areas in the Republic of Cameroon, the Zango and Ridna quarters in Ndjamera, Chad, the Ranky Kotsy areas in Sudan and also some cells in the Central Africa Republic (Goodluck, 2014). Indeed, Boko Haram has spread its activities to become a regional security threat.

Nigeria maintains close relations with the Republic of Niger because both countries share a large Hausa population on each side of their 450-mile (1500km) border. Nigeria and Niger formed Joint Commission for Cooperation (NNJCC) established in March 1971 with Permanent Secretariat in Niamey Niger, to avoid disputes that may result in a breach of peace and political instability (Abdoul, Dahou, & Marie, 2004). The Commission has several bodies. The 'High Authority' brings together the two Heads of State for an annual meeting. The 'Council of Ministers brings together high-ranking ministers from both countries for an annual meeting. These bodies are supported by Joint Expert Committees. In recent times, the NNJCC in collaboration with the two national boundary commissions has been working towards establishing new frontiers for trans-border cooperation which would link Zamfara state in Nigeria with Tahoua and Maradi regions in the Niger republic (Ibrahim, 2014).

Given that Boko Haram, in addition to posing a serious threat to internal security in Nigeria, equally constitute a formidable threat to regional stability. This study examines the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency and Nigeria-Niger socio-cultural relations between 2009 and 2024.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Clarification

Boko Haram

Boko Haram derives its name from one of Nigeria's major languages Hausa and literally, it means 'Western education is forbidden'. It is generally now used as a name for an Islamic religious sect known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad which is an Arabic word for "people who are committed to the propagation of the teachings of prophet Mohammad (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him) and Jihad". The term is specifically employed to describe the basic contention of the group which is that Western civilization as represented by its secular education is a sin and therefore forbidden to adherents of the Islamic religion. As a

sect that is against a constituted authority, Boko Haram represents a typical insurgent organization. Onuoha (2014) opined that Boko Haram (BH), meaning Western education is forbidden, an Islamist militant insurgent group based in north-eastern Nigeria, has been carrying out armed attacks on civilian populations since 2011. This perspective sees Boko Haram as a religious militant insurgent group. In their view, Andrew (2012) added, Boko Haram is seeking to establish an Islamic state with strict adherence to Shariah (Islamic law) in the economically marginalized northeastern states. This implies that Boko Haram is domiciled in the northeast of the Nigerian state. Aghedo, Iro, and Oarhe (2014) see Boko Haram as an unofficial name for the radical Islamic sect that began its activities in Nigeria in 2009, although its origin can be traced to the formation of a group called Sahaba in 1995 headed by Abubakar Lawan.

On the foregoing, Boko Haram assumed the position of a sect that employs a violent method to un-ease the Nigerian state. Ayodeji, Abimbola and Lawrence further traced the origin of Boko Haram from 1995 to 2000 scholars. However, they seem to agree that religious connotation is embedded in Boko Haram. Thus, this affirms the status of Boko Haram as a sect. Mohammed (2014) further unravels that the official name of Boko Haram is Jama'atuAhl as-SunnahLidda'awatihwa-Jihad (in Arabic) translated to means people committed to the propagation of the Prophet's teaching and Jihad. It is apt to note that the ideology of the sect is opposed to Western education and culture which they see as a threat to traditional values, beliefs and customs among Muslim communities in Northern Nigeria.

On the contrary, Walker (2012) designates Boko Haram as an insurgent group. Affirming their position, the Nigerian government declared that the ongoing armed confrontation between Nigerian security forces and the Boko Haram insurgents in the North Eastern region of the country is not a civil war but a fight against terrorism. Thus, Boko Haram is an insurgent group and as well as that adopts various methods to establish an Islamic state where its value system will not be jeopardized by any Western culture and teaching.

Insurgency

African society today is described as the home of insurgency, and the sanctuary of insurgents. Despite this conclusion, little is known about the true meaning and unique attributes of the concept by its users. Thus, Thomas (2007, p.12) posits that insurgency is "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a

constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict". Thus it could be inferred that insurgency is an organized venture with a defined aim to achieve. As observed by [Manual \(1986\)](#) and [Joel \(1998\)](#) cited in [Ford \(2007\)](#), insurgency movements traditionally find their roots in a desire for social and/or political change, and they utilize guerrilla warfare to accomplish their goals. Insurgencies converse internally from leader to leader, leader to fighter, fighter to fighter, and externally to civilians and the international community. [Mustafa \(2016\)](#) notes that insurgency has existed throughout antiquity but ebbed and flowed in strategic significance, this implies that is not unique to Africa as some conceived, rather it is a wild wind that cut across human society and civilizations. Insurgency according to [Steven and Raymond \(2004, p. 2\)](#) "is a strategy adopted by groups which cannot attain their political objectives through conventional means or by a quick seizure of power. It is used by those too weak to do otherwise". They further describe the attribute of insurgency as protracted, asymmetric violence, ambiguity, the use of complex terrain (jungles, mountains, urban areas), psychological warfare, and political mobilization—all designed to protect the insurgents and eventually alter the balance of power in their favour ([Steven & Raymond, 2004](#)). However, it is apt to note that insurgencies differ across time and regions but most follow a common life sequence. [Krepinevich in Drew \(2001\)](#) maintains that an insurgency is nothing more than an armed revolution against the established political order. It is apt to note that insurgencies are domestic affairs--unless in some cases the role of one or both sides is co-opted by an intervening power. It is thus informative that the act of insurgency remains the same from time immemorial; they only change in name and time and most of the reasons often time given were on the grounds of political agitation or dissatisfaction from a group of the citizen against the state.

Socio-Cultural Relations

A wide array of societal and cultural influences impact thoughts, feelings, behaviours, and ultimately health outcomes. They are reciprocal, non-coercive transnational interactions between two or more cultures, encompassing a range of activities that are conducted both by state and non-state actors within the space of cultural and civil society. The overall outcomes of cultural relations are greater connectivity, better mutual understanding, more and deeper relationships, mutually beneficial transactions and enhanced sustainable dialogue between states, peoples, non-state actors and cultures ([Isar, 2014](#)).

[Daniel \(2014\)](#) posited that although the on-going terrorism of the 'Nigerian Taliban' from north-eastern Nigeria, commonly known as 'Boko Haram' ('Western education is sin'),

has elicited numerous works, there is yet to be more constructive analysis that adequately accounts for the social dynamics of the group's identity and belonging in the Nigerian polity. [Nneka \(2015\)](#) opines that the spate of violent attacks by Boko Haram in recent times which has been characterized by the abduction and killing of people; destruction of houses, schools, health care centres, churches, mosques and farms has plunged the country into a chronic state of insecurity. The basics of food, health, shelter, education and protection which constitute security to the human individual primarily have therefore been threatened by the Boko Haram insurgency. On the foregoing, the study identifies some sociocultural activities that affect human lives but is deficient for the inability to link the study to the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on Nigeria and Niger's socio-cultural relations. Moreover, [Olumuyiwa and Titus \(2018\)](#) asserted that the Boko Haram insurgency in northern Nigeria has posed a multifaceted threat to the nation since 2009. In their view, successive governments have tried all possible measures to curtail it with no significant success recorded. Academia has also not been passive; hence the phenomenon has been approached from religious and political viewpoints. It was established that the Boko Haram insurgency has wreaked much havoc on social and economic activities, culminating in the retardation of growth and development in the country. The article recommended the need for serious commitment on the part of the government in equipping the security agents and fighting corruption in the security system. More importantly, prosecution of identified Boko Haram sponsors must be done without fear or favour. However, adequate attention has not been paid to the issue of the socio-economic impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on Nigeria and Niger.

The foregoing, [Remadji and Teniola \(2019\)](#) posited that the LCB was an area of intense production and flourishing economic activity before the conflict. Boko Haram has taken advantage of the contested presence of the state and the marginalisation of communities to gain a foothold and generate revenue by taking over and controlling economic opportunities. Many producers and economic actors have been bankrupted through looting or destruction of their property, loss of markets, government bans on products and closure of traditional trade routes. In addition to the insecurity caused by Boko Haram and its hold on economic activities, state counterinsurgency responses have also damaged production, transportation and trade.

Like the previous studies, [Remadji and Teniola \(2019\)](#) also did not address the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on Nigeria and Niger's socio-cultural relations. Also, the work was limited to qualitative data. Additionally, [Babagana \(2019\)](#) reveals that the activities of insurgents have affected the means of livelihood, education and transportation. Based on the findings, the Government should intensify tied security that will reduce the attacks and risks on the highways by the insurgents which will enhance the facilitation of socio-economic activities. Frustration aggression theory was adopted as a theoretical guide for the study. By way of methodology, the researcher uses a survey method of data collection through the instrument of a questionnaire administered to the target respondents. Methodologically, the work adopted a survey which allows for sampling people's opinions to conclude.

However, the study was limited to Borno State and failed to address the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on Nigeria and Niger's socio-cultural relations. Furthermore, [Sani \(2015\)](#) is of the view that Boko Haram jeopardized government policy and damaged government properties which impacted negatively on national development be it economic, political or social affairs. The daily attacks by Boko Haram on the public have caused the loss of lives and properties of billions of naira which no religion agrees with that, these acts of the militant sect are totally against Islamic teachings. In recommendation, the government is supposed to formulate a policy towards the solution and has to investigate the internal and external sponsors of Boko Haram and block the financial flow internally and externally so that the government will have control over the insurgency. [Sani \(2015\)](#) also, did not pay attention to the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on Nigeria and Niger's socio-cultural relations. For [Nicholas and Moses \(2021\)](#) the sects' activities in the North East had significantly affected the socioeconomic activities.

The general conclusion was that the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast affected the socio-economic activities of Nigeria. The underlying study only captured the negative effect of Boko Haram on the socioeconomic activities of Nigeria and did not take into cognizance the impact of Boko Haram insurgency on Nigeria and Niger's socio-cultural relations. In the view of [Adeolu \(2015\)](#), the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria has had a lot of socio-political and economic consequences in Nigeria. But it has also exposed the failure of the Nigerian state. The deadly Islamic terrorist sect in Northern Nigeria which has embarked on suicide bombing, kidnapping, and all kinds of atrocities in the bid to impose extreme Islamic ideas on Nigeria has cost more than 4,000 lives, displaced close to a million, destroyed hundreds of schools and government buildings and devastated an already ravaged

economy in the North East, one of Nigeria's poorest regions. The activities of Boko Haram affected the social and economic lives of Nigerians. The studies so far including [Adeolu \(2015\)](#) fail to discuss the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on Nigeria and Niger's socio-cultural relations.

Theoretical Framework

In the field of international relations, the concept of linkage was introduced by [James N. Rosenau](#). [Rosenau \(1969\)](#) linked domestic politics to international relations. He stated that linkage politics has its starting point in systems analysis. [Rosenau \(1969\)](#) cited in [Adelusi \(2014, p.1\)](#) defined the linkage approach as "any recurrent sequence of behaviour that originates in one system and is reacted to in another". Linkage politics considers "the perennial problems relating to the connection between domestic politics and foreign policy by taking the spheres of national and international politics as an interacting system" ([Adele, 2013, p. 128](#)). It portrays the interdependence between domestic and international systems. As a result of the growing interdependence among nations, a phenomenon that originates in a particular nation has a far-reaching effect on the global system, thereby steering up various reactions.

[Apinya \(2009\)](#) stated that the initial and terminal stages of linkage are described by [Rosenau \(1969\)](#) as 'outputs' and 'inputs' respectively. Output refers to those sequences of behaviour that originate within a polity. The policy choice from the external environment as a reaction to the output is referred to as input. It often results in a 'fused linkage' which refers to mingling between output and input. That is, one reinforces the other in a continuous process to the extent that they cannot meaningfully be analysed separately. If the behavioural patterns are deliberately created, the output and inputs are 'direct'. The outputs and inputs are 'indirect' if the patterns of behaviours are unintentional.

The input and output are linked together by three major types of linkages namely: penetrative, reactive and emulative linkages. [Adele \(2013\)](#) explained that penetrative linkage occurs when one polity serves as a participant or influence in the political or decision-making processes of another. In this scenario, there is direct involvement of foreigners in domestic political processes. [Adenusi \(2014\)](#) stated that the participating polity shares the authority to allocate values within the penetrative units. This category involves political, military and economic penetrations. Reactive linkage

involves response and adjustment to polity output emanating from elsewhere. In other words, there is no direct foreign participation in the domestic decision-making processes. The emulative linkage is established when the input takes the same form as the output. That is a nation adopting or replicating what exists in another country.

Apinya (2009) further stated that Rosenau (1969) categorized internal factors (domestic factors) and external factors (international factors) that might give rise to foreign policy or behavioural output and input. The internal factors which might determine a country's behavioural output include executive officials, legislators, civilian bureaucrats, military bureaucrats, political parties, interest groups and elite groups. Another domestic factor is attitude including the ideology of a group, political culture and public opinion. Others are institutions like the arms of government, social institutions, party systems, communication networks and military establishments; and processes such as socialization, policy-making, interest articulation and aggregation.

The external factors include the contiguous environment, regional environment, cold war environment that is an ideological bloc, radical environment meaning an international conflict with domestic linkage, resource environment which has to do with activities involving the utilization of goods and services such as in trade, fiscal relations, economic programmes, training of military personnel, attempts to acquire weapons or any capabilities that will facilitate the conduct of a polity and; organizational environment like United Nations. Therefore, on the foregoing, the study adopted the linkage theory as the most suitable theoretical framework for the study.

Relevance of the Theory to the Study

Linkage theory is more suitable to the study because it explained the problem for several reasons. First, the theory provides insight into the intricate link between domestic and external security issues, arising from the fragile institutional structure of Nigeria and the Republic of Niger and the onslaughts of Boko Haram. Second, the theory neither contests nor over stresses the relevance of national boundaries but rather unveils the mutual interdependence between country borders and the complex link between domestic and international events. The linkage theory renders visible the external links and implications of the fragile institution and activities of Boko Haram.

Boko Haram, a fierce religious extremist organization is an internal factor as it originated in Nigeria. It is a kind of interest group with an outlook and ideology that make it an insurgent. The persistence of the Boko Haram insurgency has attracted investigations into its activities. It has been accepted in

many circles that Boko Haram has links with other foreign terrorist groups such as ISIS, Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabab in Somalia. The growing link to international terrorist networks such as al-Qaeda and its affiliate account for its sophistication and lethality. This situates Boko Haram in a radical external environment as a domestic insurgency that is compatible with or finds expression in other violent extremist international organizations. The external environment considered in this study is the resource environment. Nigeria interacts with Niger due to the interdependency of nations in the international system. The resource environment between both countries includes international security interests, military training and partnership, economic agreements, trade and aid. The resource environment is vulnerable to security challenges.

It is apt to note that the extent to which states protect their territory against any potential aggressors or threats depends on the level of their ability or capability to achieve adequate institutions for border security. A firm institution for border security is very essential for the protection against any potential threat to the national security and sovereignty of a nation-state. [Spencer \(2007\)](#) viewed strong institutions for border security as the first line of defence against insurgency and the last line of a nation's territorial integrity. In contemporary nation-states, well-defined borders are not only a key element of the definition of statehood, but their consolidation has been identified as essential for building stable states and societies while unconsolidated borders have been seen as recipes for instability and conflict ([Ikome, 2012](#)). Thus, Nigeria and Niger Republic have exhibited a fragile institutional framework which manifested in what is known as porous Border and Boko Haram insurgency in northern Nigeria (especially the northeast zone) has been exacerbated by Nigeria's porous borders with Niger (1,497 kilometres).

Thus, the Boko Haram insurgency instigates a response from Nigeria that directly or indirectly affects the external environment. Nigeria's response and policies towards confronting Boko Haram are seen as output to the external environment. Niger due to its security and economic interest responds to Nigeria's output, behaviour or policy towards Boko Haram. The response of Niger becomes an input into Nigeria's polity which may result in another set of output and input leading to a process referred to as fused linkage.

The apparent intractability of the insurgency has rendered the Nigerian government and security forces clueless and in dire need of foreign assistance. The Nigerian government declared a state of emergency in three northern states on May 14, 2013, and deployed a joint security task force to quell the insurgency. Nigeria has neither been comfortable with the defence pact nor allows foreign armies to carry out operations within its shores. Such policies are often vehemently opposed in Nigeria. However, with a dependent economy and weak institutions, Nigeria has directly called for foreign assistance due to the persistence of Boko Haram. This implies that foreign nations, including Niger, can officially make input into Nigeria's security system which encompasses other sectors. The responses and changes in Nigeria-Niger relations amidst the persistence of the Boko Haram insurgency are of concern to this study.

Reactively, the activities of Boko Haram largely transcend the shores of the Nigerian state. Boko Haram established an operational presence in neighbouring Niger. In this regard, the country's south-eastern regions, which border Nigeria's insurgent-embattled Borno state, have been cited as being used by the sect for refuge, training, transit, operational planning and recruitment. The first established Boko Haram presence in Diffa was made in December 2011 when a group of suspected sect members were arrested by Nigerian security forces. Further Boko Haram-related arrests were also made in Diffa in February 2012 and in February 2014. In the most recent incident, the Nigerian military claimed to have dismantled an alleged Boko Haram cell which was planning to execute terrorist attacks in the town of Diffa in what was described as a reprisal for Niger's support of regional counterterrorism initiatives. In the days following the arrests, Nigerian authorities also claimed to have uncovered a Boko Haram base where militants were being trained in the use of long-range anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons. Thus, the foregoing has created a reaction from the Nigerian government. Persuaded by its regional and international partners to become more actively involved, Niger joined the military efforts of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and other measures taken by the Nigerian authorities, such as the extension of the state of emergency introduced in February 2015 that includes a ban on some commercial activities. The government is also drafting a special plan for the resolution of the crisis in the Diffa region with the support of regional and international partners, thus, creating a paradigm shift of output on Niger's foreign policy.

On the other spectrum of the penetrative linkage, the south-eastern Diffa region of Niger a relatively wealthy territory has a special relationship with the Nigerian state of Borno. These

close historical, religious, and economic ties explain the resonance of the message spread by Mohamed Yusuf, the Nigerian founder of Boko Haram. Many Nigeriens, especially young men, became his supporters after they travelled to Maiduguri, the capital of Borno, only 425km away from Diffa, in search of religious training or business opportunities. Therefore, when Nigerian armed forces massacred more than 1,000 of his Nigerian followers in July 2009, many members of Boko Haram found refuge in the south-eastern. Moreover, the Niger-Nigeria border is artificial; it was drawn in the colonial period by London and Paris, a process driven in part by the desire to check German expansion in West Africa rather than recognition of ethnicities or other indigenous factors. In many ways, Niger and northern Nigeria have much in common culturally and the lingua franca of both regions is Hausa.

Nigeria and Niger are culturally, historically, geographically, and economically inextricably interwoven, such that developments in one country reverberate in the other. This intricate relationship along the border has impacted communities on both sides of the border, with implications for the politics, economy, society, and security of the two neighbouring states. The border separating the two countries is a colonial one, arising from the contest for supremacy between the British and French in the race for Lake Chad in the closing years of the 19th century. This artificial border, which split the same ethnic and religious groups in the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno, created an anomalous situation by dividing the population into separate national states, while the communities carried on business as usual in their new nation-states.

The linkage theory is relevant to this study because it highlights the various linkages between Nigeria and Niger republic. The two countries were connected socio-culturally and it also explain the indirect outputs and input, the dynamics of penetrative, emulative and reactive connection of the spread of Boko Haram insurgency between the two countries and their behaviours and reactions toward each other. The theory also inevitably explained the impact of the independent variable (Boko Haram insurgency) on the dependent variable (Nigeria-Niger relations). Boko Haram insurgency has affected Nigeria-Niger socio-cultural relations significantly.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study evolved the survey method as a design utilizing the questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. The survey research method is a systematic method for gathering information from a sample of entities to construct quantitative descriptors of the attributes of the larger population of which the entities are members (Avedian, 2014).

The Population of the Study

Matters of border security relations cannot be left in the hands of anybody except those saddled with the responsibility of managing such relations for their countries. Thus, the targeted population for this study was drawn from the following organizations in Table 1. The targeted population for this study was drawn from the following organizations in Table 1.

Table 1: Population of the Study

S/N	Category of targeted Population	Selected Units	The population of Staff in the selected units
1.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nigeria	West African Affairs Department	248
2.	Niger Immigration	Niger Immigration at the border (Maiduguri)	87
3.	Nigerian Customs Service Head Quarters Abuja,	Border Division	141
4.	Niger Embassy, Nigeria	Niger Embassy, Nigeria	18
5.	Ministry of Defence Nigeria	Operational Unit	134
6.	Nigeria Immigration Service, Head Quarters Abuja	Border Division	76
7.	University of Maiduguri	Political Science Department	46
8.	Niger Immigration Service, Diffa	Diffa, Niger Republic	53
9.	Niger Consulate Post	Niger Consulate Post	26
10.	Mobile Border Control Unit	Niger Republic	232
11.	Diffa, Niger Republic	Diffa community, Niger Republic	9334
Total			10,395

Source: Field survey, 2023

Therefore, the sample size was drawn from the above-selected organizations to administer questionnaires using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula. Where:

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

Where: n= sample size required

N= number of people in the population

e= precision (0.5)²

$$N = \frac{10,395}{1+10,395 (e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{10,395}{1+10,395 (0.5)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{10,395}{1+10,395 (0.25)}$$

$$n = \frac{10,395}{1+10,395 \times 0.25}$$

$$n = \frac{10,395}{2,599.75}$$

$$n = 3.998461390518319$$

Thus, the sample size is 400.

However, in line with the formula computed above, the sample sizes for this study are four hundred (400).

Sampling Technique and Procedure

Sampling is the procedure of selecting from a population to ensure that the portion of the population selected is representative of the population. There are two main types of sampling methods-probability and non-probability. Furthermore, the population is too large to sample all the respondents thus the selection of the sample for the study involved a two-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, a purposive selection of the respondents was made respectively. In the last stage, from the sample frame of 400, simple random techniques were used to administer the questionnaire.

Method of Data Collection

The researchers used the questionnaire to collect primary data for the study and the secondary data; books, journals and internet materials were used. The questionnaire was chosen because of its advantage of gathering information directly from the sample population. It is cost-effective and proved to be useful in sounding the opinions of respondents.

Method of Data Analysis

The data for the study was collected, coded and analysed using the computer-based Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21 for Microsoft Windows). Descriptive statistics were used to examine

the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on Nigeria-Niger socio-cultural relations.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data obtained through the questionnaire has been presented below using simple frequency and percentages. 368 questionnaires were returned and properly filled and 32 questionnaires were either not returned or invalid. The presentation is made below in Table 2.

Table 2: Analysis of the Responses to the Impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on Nigeria-Niger Socio-Cultural Relation

Responses	SA	A	DA	SD	UD
Boko Haram's violent activities have disrupted socio-cultural and religious activities between Nigeria and the Niger Republic	316	48	0	0	4
Measuring whether the Boko Haram insurgency has an impact on the interaction of Nigeria and Niger Republic citizens, especially in the bordering towns	280	88	0	0	0
Boko Haram's violent activities have affected cross-border marital activities among people in the bordering towns	309	59	0	0	0
The cordial cross-border visitation between the people of Nigeria and the Niger Republic has been restricted due to the Boko Haram's violent activities	300	68	0	0	0

Source: Field survey, 2023

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From Table 2, 316 respondents representing 85.9% of the total respondents strongly agreed that Boko Haram's violent activities have disrupted socio-cultural and religious activities between Nigeria and the Niger Republic, 48 representing 13.0% of the total respondents also agreed with it while 4 respondents 0% of the total respondents are undecided. This implies that Nigeria and Niger's socio-cultural relations. Table 2 equally reveals that 280 respondents representing 76.1% of the total respondents strongly agreed that the Boko Haram insurgency has an impact on the interaction of Nigeria and Niger Republic citizens, especially in the bordering towns, however, 88 respondents representing 23.9% of the total respondents also agreed to it.

Table 2 also reveals that 309 respondents representing 82.0% of the total respondents strongly agreed that the activities of Boko Haram have affected cross-marital activities among the people at the bordering towns. Similarly, 59 respondents representing 18.0% of the total respondents agreed that the activities of Boko Haram have affected cross-border marital activities among the people in the bordering towns. Finally, Table 2 reveals shows that 300 respondents representing 18.5% of the total respondents strongly agreed that the cordial cross-border visitation between the people of Nigeria and Niger Republic has been restricted due to the Boko Haram violent

activities similarly, 68 respondents representing 18.5% of the total respondents also agreed.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The objective of this study is to examine the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on Nigeria-Niger's socio-cultural relations. The finding shows that Boko Haram started in Nigeria and over time spread its tentacles to the Niger Republic. This is evident in the numerous attacks staged by the sect in Nigeria and Niger as reported by respondents and [Kyari \(2020\)](#). The Boko Haram insurgency has destroyed relationships among the people in the border towns; relationships between different groups of people have been limited by the insurgency and are more or less trivial. This is confirmed by [Hassan \(2014\)](#) that the Boko Haram insurgency has discouraged parents from enrolling their children and wards in schools and those already in schools have been withdrawn in the affected towns and border regions. About 316 respondents representing 85.9% of the total respondents strongly agreed that Boko Haram's violent activities have disrupted socio-cultural and religious activities between Nigeria and the Niger Republic, 48 representing 13.0% of the total respondents also agreed with it while 4 respondents 0% of the total respondents are undecided.

On the foregoing, the Boko Haram insurgency has reduced the level of contact among residents in the bordering towns of Nigeria and the Niger Republic. People were warned to keep away from border towns or they would be shot on sight. This is because the boundary between Niger and Nigeria, and all adjoining settlements to the south of the river were still under Boko Haram control ([Reuters, 2015](#)). About 280 respondents representing 76.1% of the total respondents strongly agreed that the Boko Haram insurgency has an impact on the interaction of Nigeria and Niger Republic citizens, especially in the bordering towns, however, 88 respondents representing 23.9% of the total respondents also agreed to it. The responses of Nigeria and the Niger Republic to the Boko Haram menace, the closure of borders, and forced relocation of some inhabitants at the border towns such as Kangarwa, Baruwa, Chukujani, Tuwo-Indi, Ali-Kurkuri, Chuwundi, Chari-Ngawuri, and several villages on the shores, islands, and islets of the lake were forced to evacuate further north and west. This is confirmed by [Reuters \(2015\)](#) in the Diffa region, situated 1400 kilometres from the capital of Niger

Republic on the border of Borno State in Nigeria due to the increasingly frequent Boko Haram attacks more than 150,000 people are reported to have fled to Diffa.

The cordial cross-border visitation between the people of Nigeria and the Niger Republic has been restricted due to the Boko Haram violent activities. Illela and Konni were said to be formed by two brothers and no individual in Birni-N'Konni or Illela is without a relative, friend or business partner across the border and a day does not come to pass without people from either side of the border crossing to attend to family affairs but all these are no more because of Boko Haram insurgency. Similarly, Illela a border town in Niger is popular with traditional wrestling popularly known as "kokawa" while Birni N'Konni is known for its specialization in traditional boxing popularly known as "dambe" alongside modern sports such as football has contributed to no small measure towards fostering cross-border flows between the two communities but has far been disrupted by Boko Haram insurgency (Daniel, 2023). To affirm the forgoing, about 300 respondents in Table 2 representing 18.5% of the total respondents strongly agreed that the cordial cross-border visitation between the people of Nigeria and the Niger Republic has been restricted due to the Boko Haram violent activities similarly, 68 respondents representing 18.5% of the total respondents also agreed.

CONCLUSION

Boko Haram is a group made up of Nigerian citizens who believed that Western influences and Western forms of government caused people to be sinful, which led to corruption. Therefore, the return to pure Islamic forms of society was the only cure for society's ills. The group sprang up from a religious commune established by Mallam Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. It started as a peaceful organization, advocating a strict interpretation and implementation of Islamic law in Nigeria. The Boko Haram organization's ideology is influenced by orthodox Islamic doctrines that forbid Western culture and its system of government. In 2009, the sect launched an insurrection centred in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital city. In suppressing the insurrection, the police and security forces extra-judicially killed Mohammed Yusuf and more than 700 of his followers. After the insurrection, the group then went underground until 2011, when, under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau; it mounted a successful jailbreak and its first suicide bombings of police headquarters and the United Nations buildings in Abuja. Since then, Boko Haram's activities have included recurrent attacks; the killing of persons; wanton destruction of property, population displacements, and other forms of aggression.

The activities of the group were initially limited within Nigeria but in the long run, shifted to the neighbouring countries of Niger Republic. Having evaluated the information from the raw data gathered through questionnaires evidence from the analysis of this study showed that the Boko Haram violent attacks have affected Nigeria-Niger socio-cultural relations. The Boko Haram insurgency has destroyed relationships among the people in the border towns; relationships between different groups of people have been limited by the insurgency and are more or less trivial and have reduced the level of contact among residents in the bordering towns of Nigeria and the Niger Republic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from primary and secondary data collected, the following recommendations have been made; for Nigeria and the Niger Republic to maintain their socio-cultural relations there is a need for joint military operation strategy as a formal modality not only as a means to restrain the Boko Haram threat. The ungoverned spaces, with little or no government presence in Nigeria and the Niger Republic creating a sanctuary for Boko Haram, should be converted into military training camps to ensure government presence and thus will checkmate the porosity of the borders.

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