PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR INSTITUTE OF ADMINISTRATION (ICIA 2025)

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY ZARIA - NIGERIA

Website: *https://icia.org.ng* **ISBN:** *978-978-695-265-9* ***Volume I, 2025***

EFFECT OF INSECURITY ON ROAD TRANSPORTATION ALONG NIGER AND KADUNA STATES ROADS

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of rising insecurity on transportation along Niger and Kaduna States roads. Insecurity, manifested through banditry, kidnapping, and killings of passengers has directly increased over time, and disrupted mobility and overall livelihood activities of the people of the states. Insecurity has continued to threaten the sustainability of business and agricultural activities, as well as public safety. The study adopts a qualitative study approach, drawing on interviews with transport operators, commuters, and local officials, complemented by secondary data. Data gathered was analyzed thematically. Findings indicate that insecurity has led to higher transport costs, reduced frequency of trips on high-risk routes, and increased travel time due to military checkpoints and road closures. These disruptions have significantly affected the movement of goods and people, particularly in rural and intercity routes, with serious implications for livelihoods, trade, and access to essential services. The study recommends the urgent need for coordinated security interventions, community engagement, and infrastructure investment to safeguard transportation systems in the study area.

Keywords: Activities, Insecurity, Kidnappings, Transportation**,** Kaduna and Niger State.

1.1 Introduction

Transportation is widely recognized as a fundamental driver of socio-economic development. It acts as the lifeblood of economic activity, facilitating the movement of goods, services, labor, and information across regions. Efficient transport systems connect producers to markets,

workers to jobs, and consumers to products, thereby stimulating economic growth, reducing poverty, and promoting social inclusion. Transportation, particularly road transportation, forms the backbone of global economic activity, facilitating the movement of people, goods, and services, and fostering economic growth, trade, and social cohesion across nations. Globally, the efficiency and safety of road networks are paramount, directly influencing a country's competitiveness and its citizens' quality of life (Adebayo 2023)

However, in many developing regions, persistent challenges such as inadequate funding, poor maintenance, and environmental factors are compounded by escalating insecurity. This interplay of factors significantly impedes the effective functioning of transport systems, leading to severe socio-economic consequences (Musa 2024)

In Africa, and particularly within West Africa, various forms of insecurity, including terrorism, communal clashes, armed robbery, and banditry, have emerged as major threats to national development and regional integration. Global report on infrastructure and insecurity, prolonged conflicts in countries such as Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan, and the Sahel region have severely damaged transport infrastructure and made roadways unsafe. Groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Shabaab in Somalia and also in West Africa and parts of East Africa, armed bandits and criminal gangs frequently attack vehicles, kidnap passengers, and extort transport operators. Leading to Destruction of Roads and Bridges. And also Transport operators and passengers avoid routes known for attacks, resulting in increased congestion on safer alternatives, longer travel distances, and higher costs. Due to risks, transporters charge higher fees to compensate for insurance, security measures, and ransom payments (Benjamin, 2024)

These threats disproportionately affect critical infrastructure like roads, transforming once vital arteries into perilous routes. Nigeria, as Africa's most populous nation and largest economy, heavily relies on its road network for internal commerce and cross-border trade. However, over the past decade, the country has been grappling with an escalating crisis of insecurity, which has taken on varied and complex forms, including the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East, militancy in the Niger Delta and more recently, widespread banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the North-West and parts of the North-Central regions (Duru, 2024)

According to Duru, (2024) Niger and Kaduna States, strategically positioned as crucial transit hubs connecting the northern and southern parts of Nigeria, have become epicenters of these nefarious activities. The major road networks traversing these states, such as the infamous Abuja-Kaduna Expressway, Kaduna-Birnin Gwari Road, Minna-Kontagora road, and various routes within Niger State, are no longer safe passages but rather perilous stretches where travelers and commuters face constant threats. This pervasive insecurity has not only instilled deep-seated fear and trauma among the populace but has also had profound and multifaceted consequences on the functionality, usability, and development of the road infrastructure itself, as well as the broader socio-economic landscape of these vital regions. Understanding the precise nature and extent of these impacts is crucial for devising effective mitigation strategies and restoring normalcy and prosperity to these areas.

1.2 Statement of problem

Insecurity has been a subject of discussion in the globe, which powerful and developing nations fight for independence and subjugation of few minorities creating major problems, Countries like United Kingdom, United States of America and Australia experience security threats but typically differ from patterns seen in countries with widespread insurgency or banditry. Most kidnappings tend to be related to domestic issues such as custody disputes or ransom demands, rather than organized crime or terrorism. Cases involving child abductions or criminal kidnappings often receive intense media attention but remain rare in statistical terms. The UK police and law enforcement agencies have robust systems for rapid response and investigation (Udensi, 2025). In Africa also insecurity has escalated beyond thinking, Terrorist Groups claiming to be nationalist group disrupt peaceful coexistence in Africa, countries like Sudan, South Africa, are affected from one security problems to another.

In Nigeria especially in the North, persistent and escalating insecurity, specifically marked by rampant banditry, kidnappings for ransom, armed robbery, and targeted killings, has rendered the road networks in Niger and Kaduna States extremely hazardous, presenting a complex and multi-dimensional problem. While the physical state of roads in Nigeria has long been a challenge due to underfunding and poor maintenance (Nigerian infrastructure report). The added layer of insecurity has exacerbated existing deficiencies and introduced new critical concerns that undermine the very purpose of these crucial transportation links (Bashir 2020).

The most devastating is the loss of lives and property of road users. Travelers, commuters, and transporters frequently face ambushes, kidnappings, and outright killings, leading to a palpable sense of fear and apprehension (Premium Times, SBM Intelligence report). For instance, the Abuja-Kaduna Expressway has gained notoriety for frequent abduction incidents, with countless individuals, including high-profile figures and ordinary citizens, falling victim to criminal gangs demanding huge ransoms. This has resulted in a significant reduction in road travel, with many opting for more expensive or less accessible alternative modes (like rail or air, despite their own security incidents, e.g., the Abuja-Kaduna train attack in 2022 (BBC News, 2022), or simply avoiding travel altogether, crippling mobility.

Kaduna-Birnin Gwari road network and its immediate surrounding communities, as well as selected critical routes within Niger State known for significant security challenges (e.g., routes connecting local government areas like Rafi, Shiroro, Munya, and Lapai).

The Kaduna-Birnin Gwari road, often referred to as "The Red Zone," is a particularly perilous stretch infamous for persistent and severe insecurity. It serves as a vital artery connecting Kaduna metropolis to the agrarian and commercially active Birnin Gwari Local Government Area, and further links to Niger, Zamfara, and Katsina States. Its strategic location, coupled with the presence of vast ungoverned forest reserves (like Kamuku, Dansadau, and Dajin Rugu forests) that serve as hideouts for criminal gangs, has made it a hotspot for banditry and kidnapping activities. Recent reports (e.g., Vanguard, September 2023; HumAngle, September 2022) cited in (Ahmad 2022) indicate a history of frequent ambushes and blockades of roads,

mass kidnappings for ransom, targeted killings, attacks on communities and farmlands and as well imposed "taxes" and protection fees.

Secondly, the insecurity directly impacts economic activities and supply chains. The disruption of goods and services movement, increased cost of transportation due to higher insurance premiums, demands for escorts, and payment of ransoms (which in itself fuels the criminal enterprise), directly translates to inflated prices of goods and services, affecting livelihoods and contributing to national inflation (Nnamdi, 2025). Farmers in rural areas struggle to transport their produce to markets, impacting food security and deepening poverty, while traders are hesitant to venture into these high-risk zones. The pervasive fear deters both local and foreign investment, hindering agricultural activities and overall commerce, which are primary economic drivers in these states (Ahmad, 2022).

Thirdly, the rampant attacks led to the deterioration and underdevelopment of the road infrastructure itself. Increased operational costs for maintenance contractors due to inherent security risks, coupled with the inability of maintenance teams to access dangerous areas, means that critical road repairs are neglected. Furthermore, reduced traffic due to fear of attack can lead to underutilization of certain routes, impacting future investment in their upkeep. In some instances, the presence of abandoned and vandalized vehicles or the deliberate destruction of transport assets by criminals further adds to the decay and disutility of these road networks (James 2022).

Finally, beyond the immediate economic and infrastructural implications, the sustained insecurity on these road networks fosters social dislocation, isolation of communities, and severe psychological trauma, some communities along Birnin Gwari were banned from making phone calls, a complete shutdown of network parameters to regulate banditry and kidnappings. Communities along these routes are increasingly isolated, facing reduced access to essential services like healthcare and education. The constant threat of violence, including kidnappings that often involve torture and psychological abuse, breeds distrust, fragments social cohesion, and inflicts severe psychological stress on residents and frequent travelers, eroding the overall quality of life and hindering human development (2025).

Despite various efforts by government and security agencies, the menace persists, indicating a need for a deeper, evidence-based understanding of the intricate ways in which insecurity manifests on these critical arteries and its pervasive effects on the very fabric of society and economy in Niger and Kaduna States. This study aims examine the effect of insecurity, banditry, and killings on the road networks of these states.

a. Research Question:

6. How has insecurity affected the frequency and volume of road transportation in Kaduna and Niger States?
7. How has insecurity affected socio-economic impacts of road transportation in Niger and Kaduna States?

1.4 Assumptions of the Study:

4. Insecurity has affected the frequency and volume of road transportation in Niger and Kaduna States.
5. Insecurity has affected the socio-economic impact of road transportation in Niger and Kaduna States.

2.0 Conceptual Exploration

2.1 Concept of Insecurity

The word "insecurity" has myriads of connotations. It signifies danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. Beland (2005) defines insecurity as "the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection." It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. This implies that insecurity is an absence of peace, order and security. Achumba, Ighomeroho, Akpor (2013) defined insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger. Danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety. Anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. These definitions of insecurity underscore a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur. People engaged in business activity, either directly or indirectly, to satisfy unlimited human wants. Insecurity, like security is often used in a number of ways. Many people would take it to mean lack of safety or the existence of danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of trust; doubtful; inadequately guarded or protected; lack of stability; disturbed; lack of protection and unsafe (Achumba, 2013). Insecurity will make you lose trust, be frightened, unsettled, oppressed, lose focus, and be devastated and lose your humanity. Aliyu, (1998) opines that insecurity is the State of being subject in every respect to terror, threat, risk, molestation, bullying, harassment, etc. Insecurity, for example, can be conceived as a threat to the state that often accounted for the arms and nuclear weapons race to protect the state. For example, it has been stated that the fear of kidnappers in the Kaduna-Abuja road and other parts of the north is less common compared to the fear of Boko-Haram.

2.2 Human Security

The concept of human security arises from the conventional security studies which centers on the security of the state. It is focused on how individuals can be protected from both traditional and non-traditional threats (Otu, 2022). An important belief in this concept is that peace and stability cannot be achieved within or among states when humans are deprived of security. Human security has been defined by some to mean safety of people from violent and non-violent threat. It is a condition of being characterized by freedom from pervasive threat to people's rights, their ability or even their lives. It calls to taking people as the point of reference rather than focusing on government or territorial protection (Afolabi, 2009). Human Security are characterized by seven dimensions namely:

Economic security is a type of security that requires that there should be an assured basic income for individuals mostly from productive and remunerative work or from a publicly financed safety net.

Food security demand that people should have physical and economic access to food. Health security requires that there should be a guarantee of minimum protection from diseases and unhealthy daily life.

Environmental security aims at protecting people from short- and long-term effects of nature, manmade threats in nature and deterioration of natural environment.

Personal security is focused on protection of individuals and people from physical violence either from the state or outside the state, which could be from violent individuals, sub-state actors or domestic abuse.

Community security aims to protecting people form the loss of traditional relationships, values and from sectarian and ethnic violence.

Political security guarantees protection of fundamental human rights of citizenry (Afolabi, 2009)

2.3 Effect of Insecurity on Road Transportation

According to Agbere (2022) Road transportation is the backbone of economic and social activities in most countries, especially in developing regions where alternative modes such as rail and air are limited. However, insecurity in the form of banditry, terrorism, kidnappings, armed robbery, and political unrest poses a significant threat to the safety, efficiency, and sustainability of road transport systems. The consequences are far-reaching, affecting not just mobility but also trade, investment, social services, and national development.

Disruption of Transport Services

Insecurity often leads to direct disruptions in transport operations. Transport companies and individual operators are forced to reduce or completely suspend services in high-risk areas due to the constant threat of attacks, ambushes, or kidnappings. This disruption creates transportation gaps and isolates communities, particularly in rural and conflict-prone regions. In northern Nigeria, transport routes connecting Kaduna, Zamfara, and Niger states are frequently disrupted by bandit attacks, leading to road closures and reduced vehicle movement.

Increased Transportation Costs

Insecurity results in a sharp increase in the cost of transportation due to several factors like Transporters demand higher fares to compensate for the risk. Increased fuel usage from longer detours taken to avoid insecure areas. Extra expenses on security escorts, vehicle fortification, and insurance.

These costs are often passed on to consumers, driving up the prices of goods and services and contributing to inflation.

Decline in Passenger Confidence and Mobility

Travelers are often reluctant to use roads perceived as dangerous. The fear of being kidnapped, robbed, or killed discourages Commuters from going to work or school. Businesspeople from

transporting goods. This decline in passenger mobility affects productivity, business operations, and access to essential services like healthcare and education.

Deterrence of Investment and Economic Activity

Insecure transport corridors discourage domestic and foreign investment in logistics, agriculture, mining, and retail sectors. Investors avoid regions where the movement of goods and personnel cannot be guaranteed. This results in Economic stagnation in affected regions.Underdevelopment of transport-related industries.

Damage to Infrastructure

Insecurity often leads to vandalism or destruction of transport infrastructure, such as Bombing of bridges and roads during terrorist attacks. Looting and arson at transport terminals. And also obstruction by illegal checkpoints and ambush sites.

This not only causes physical damage but also increases government expenditure on repair and security, diverting resources from development

Restricted Access to Social Services

Poor road security limits people's ability to access to healthcare (e.g., pregnant women unable to reach hospitals).more so insecurity can disrupt education and access to education as students and teachers avoiding unsafe routes). The net result is deepening poverty, social exclusion, and poor human development indicators in affected areas.

7. Humanitarian Consequences

In conflict or insurgency zones, insecurity on roads restricts the movement of humanitarian aid, food supplies, and medical equipment. Humanitarian workers and delivery trucks become targets or are unable to pass due to roadblocks and violence, aggravating crises in already vulnerable communities.

8. Loss of Lives and Property

The most tragic effect is the loss of lives of passengers, drivers, and transport workers due to violent attacks, kidnappings, and armed robbery. Victims may also lose vehicles, cargo, and personal belongings, leading to economic and emotional trauma

2.4 Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

Causes of security challenges in Nigeria Jaja & Odigbo (2013) have pointed out some causes of insecurity in Nigeria which the followings:

i. The Menace of Unemployment and Poverty: It is a fact that unemployment causes poverty and extreme poverty leads to a crime that gives rise to insecurity. Aliyu (1998)

characterized poverty as a situation in which people live below a defined standard of living income so that individuals and nations are classified and identified as poor.

ii. Elite exploitation of ethnicity and religious differences: It is worth bearing in mind that the country's diverse ethnic make-up is not itself a cause of insecurity in Nigeria; however, political and religious leaders across the nation sometimes use ethnic sentiments to achieve their selfish ambitions.

iii. Corruption: Nonetheless, corruption was largely responsible for government failure and systemic infrastructure collapse, resulting in large-scale insecurity in Nigeria. The state of insecurity in Nigeria is unquestionably a result of government failure, traceable to widespread corruption.

iv. Weak security apparatus: Nigeria's security system is seen as very poor in both personnel and equipment. Security officers are poorly trained and remunerated. As a result, the required expertise is not available to meet modern security challenges. The contribution of the security personnel to the Nigerian project of ensuring general safety is equally of serious concern. This weak security system can be due to a number of factors including corruption, insufficient personnel, lack of modern equipment, poor safety personnel health, and inadequate staff.

v. Porous border: The country's unstable frontiers, where human movements are essentially untracked, have led to Nigeria's level of insecurity. There is an unregulated inflow of Small Arms and Light Weapons into the country as a result of the porous borders which has enabled militancy and crime in Nigeria. Edeko (2011) has reported that Nigeria hosts over 70% of about 8million illegal weapons that have been used to create a security crisis. In addition, the porous condition of both the Nigerian borders has contributed the uncontrollable influx of migrants, predominantly young people, from nearby countries such as the Republic of Niger, Chad and the Republic of Benin accountable for some of the insecurity promoting criminal activities in Nigeria, (Camara, 2023).

vi. Marginalization and inequalities in the country: Nigeria's current government has been strongly charged with ethnic disparity, and the marginalization of some sections of the country in the provision of basic infrastructure, and theses have significantly compounded Nigeria's security (Nnamdi, 2024). Currently, key political positions were given to people from Northern extraction while the South-East was left in the cold. That may explain the agitation for the Biafra and Shi'a strongly known as the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) and several breaches of security this followed the agitation. Besides, it is quite clear that Nigeria's life chances are extremely disparate. Vast majorities of the public have a sense of deprivation, oppression, marginalization, and this has resulted in dissatisfaction and loss of hope, particularly among the youth. Such young people are now voicing their disillusionment with the state of affairs by any means possible, whether legal or illegal. The consequence of this is growing uncertainty (James, 2022).

vii. Bad governance and poor leadership: The primary duties of any government is to protect lives and properties of its citizenry. The absence of these basic amenities in Nigeria is embarrassingly not due to a shortage of funds but rather to corruption at the highest level of leadership structure. It is therefore an enormous task to take

responsibility for giving leadership direction in such communities or societies in a multi-ethnic and religious society like Nigeria, given the current scenario of the democratic politics in which the nation has been located. To this end, believing that weak leadership, has added more challenges to the uncertainty and causes of insecurity not just in the north but also in Nigeria in general

2.5 Empirical Review

Usman and Ogbole (2023) conducted a geospatial study of insecurity's impact on road transportation in Kaduna State. Using primary data (questionnaires and focus group discussions) and ArcGIS mapping from 2017 to 2021, the research found that armed robbery, kidnapping, ethnic violence, and religious violence significantly threaten road networks across the state. Over 61% of local government areas experienced at least one security incident, with areas like Birnin Gwari, Chikun, and Giwa most affected. The study highlights how persistent criminal activities create unsafe travel conditions, thereby disrupting mobility and increasing vulnerability among road users.

Obodo and Onota (2025) examined the Abuja–Kaduna Expressway—a major interstate highway—and documented how rising incidents of kidnapping, banditry, ambushes, and violence have transformed the corridor into a high-risk environment. Using qualitative interviews with commuters and triangulation with secondary sources, the study found that insecurity has altered commuter behavior, reduced travel, and undermined socio-economic activities connected to road transport. It also highlighted psychological trauma and prolonged fear as significant outcomes of sustained highway insecurity.

2.6 Theoretical framework

Human Security Theory is an approach to security studies that shifts attention away from protecting states to protecting **people**. Human Security Theory represents **a paradigm shift** in security studies by placing human welfare at the center of security discourse.

Human Security Theory argues that **the real referent of security is the individual, not the state.** Security is therefore defined as freedom from fear, freedom from want, and the ability to live in dignity. It focuses on protecting people from everyday threats such as poverty, disease, hunger, environmental degradation, political repression, and violent conflict (Vejnović 2023).

Human Security Theory is **commonly associated with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** rather than a single individual. The concept was **formally introduced in the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report.** Key figures linked to its development includes **Mahbub ul Haq** (Pakistani economist) and **Amartya Sen** (Indian philosopher and economist)

These scholars argued that development and security must be people-centered rather than state-centered

The 1994 UNDP Report identified **seven dimensions of human security**:

1. **Economic security** – protection from poverty and unemployment
2. **Food security** – access to sufficient and nutritious food
3. **Health security** – protection from diseases and poor health systems
4. **Environmental security** – protection from environmental hazards
5. **Personal security** – safety from violence, crime, and abuse
6. **Community security** – protection of cultural identity and social relations
7. **Political security** – protection of human rights and freedoms

According to Shahnawaz (2023) Human Security Theory rests on several key assumptions:

a. Individuals are the primary referent of security

The theory assumes that **states exist to serve people**, not the other way around. If citizens are unsafe, the state cannot be considered secure.

b. Threats to security are multidimensional

Security threats are not only military. **Poverty, hunger, disease, and environmental crises** can be just as dangerous as war.

c. Development and security are interlinked

Underdevelopment creates insecurity, and insecurity hinders development. Therefore, **human development is a security strategy**.

d. Prevention is better than reaction

Human security emphasizes **early intervention and prevention** rather than responding only after crises escalate into conflict.

e. Universal but context-specific

While human security applies to all people globally, the **specific threats differ across societies.**

Application of Human Security Theory to the Study

Human Security Theory provides a suitable analytical framework for understanding the effect of insecurity on road transportation in Niger and Kaduna States because it shifts the focus of security from the protection of the state to the protection of individuals and communities. Rather than viewing insecurity on the Kaduna–Niger road corridors purely as a breakdown of law and order or a threat to territorial integrity, the theory emphasizes how insecurity undermines people's safety, livelihoods, dignity, and access to basic services.

Personal Security Dimension

At the core of Human Security Theory is personal security, which refers to protection from physical violence, fear, and threats to life. Findings from this study strongly align with this dimension. The prevalence of banditry, kidnappings, ambushes, and killings along major routes

such as the Kaduna–Birnin Gwari road and Minna–Kontagora road demonstrates a severe breakdown of personal security. Commuters, drivers, and traders face constant threats to their lives, leading to travel avoidance, withdrawal of night transport services, and reduced frequency of trips. From a human security perspective, roads that were meant to facilitate mobility have become spaces of fear, violating the fundamental right of individuals to move safely.

Economic Security Dimension

Human Security Theory assumes that people require stable livelihoods and income to live securely. The study reveals that insecurity has disrupted road transportation, increased transport costs, and reduced access to markets. Farmers are unable to move produce, traders face inflated logistics costs, and drivers lose income due to route abandonment. These conditions directly threaten economic security, as households experience declining income, rising poverty, and loss of employment opportunities linked to transportation and trade. The inflated fares and market prices reported in the findings reflect how insecurity on roads translates into broader economic hardship for ordinary people.

Individuals Are the Primary Referent of Security

Human Security Theory assumes that **the safety of individuals, not the territorial integrity of the state, is the true measure of security**. In the context of this study, although Nigeria remains a sovereign state with functioning security institutions, the lived experiences of commuters, drivers, traders, and farmers along Niger–Kaduna road corridors reveal profound insecurity.

Road users face kidnapping, killings, and constant fear, demonstrating that state security presence does not automatically translate into human security. The reduced frequency of travel, abandonment of routes like Kaduna–Birnin Gwari, and preference for air or rail transport show that individuals prioritize personal survival over state assurances. Thus, insecurity on these roads represents a failure to protect individuals, validating the human security assumption that state security alone is insufficient.

Security Threats Are Multidimensional

Human Security Theory assumes that threats to security go beyond military violence to include **economic, social, psychological, and environmental threats**. Findings from the study strongly support this assumption. Insecurity manifests not only as armed attacks but also as increased transport costs, loss of livelihoods, food scarcity, psychological trauma, and social displacement.

For example, farmers' inability to transport produce affects food security, while increased fares and detours undermine economic security. Psychological fear and trauma among drivers and passengers further illustrate non-military dimensions of insecurity. Therefore, the insecurity on Niger and Kaduna roads confirms that security threats are interconnected and extend far beyond physical violence.

Freedom from Fear and Freedom from Want Are Central to Security **and freedom from want**. The study reveals a clear absence of both. Fear dominates travel decisions, as night

transportation has been abandoned and entire routes avoided. Simultaneously, freedom from want is compromised by inflation, loss of income, unemployment among drivers, and reduced access to markets and essential services.

This dual deprivation demonstrates that insecurity on road networks directly erodes human dignity and well-being, reinforcing the theory's claim that security must be understood in terms of everyday survival and economic stability.

Development and Security Are Interdependent

Human Security Theory assumes that **underdevelopment breeds insecurity and insecurity undermine development**. The study illustrates this cycle vividly. Poor road infrastructure and weak governance initially created vulnerability, which insecurity then exploited. In turn, banditry further discourages investment, disrupts trade, and accelerates poverty.

For instance, reduced agricultural output due to unsafe transport routes deepens food insecurity and economic hardship, which may in turn fuel further criminality. This confirms the theory's assumption that security and development cannot be treated as separate policy domains.

Prevention Is More Effective Than Reactive Security Responses

The theory assumes that **preventive, people-centered strategies are more effective than purely reactive or militarized responses**. Despite increased checkpoints and security escorts on Niger–Kaduna roads, insecurity persists. The study shows that road closures, convoy dependence, and heavy checkpoints often delay movement rather than prevent attacks.

This supports the human security argument for preventive measures such as community engagement, early-warning systems, economic empowerment, and infrastructure development, rather than relying solely on armed patrols after violence has occurred

Security Is Universal but Context-Specific

Human Security Theory assumes that while all people deserve security, **the nature of threats varies by context**. In Niger and Kaduna States, insecurity is shaped by banditry, ungoverned forest spaces, rural poverty, and weak border control. These local realities explain why road transportation is particularly vulnerable in this region.

Applying this assumption, the study highlights that solutions must be locally grounded—addressing forest hideouts, rural livelihoods, and community-based security—rather than adopting one-size-fits-all national security strategies.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore the effect of insecurity on road transportation along the Kaduna to Niger road networks. A qualitative approach is appropriate

for this research as it seeks to understand the lived experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies of individuals directly affected by insecurity in transportation.

3.2 Data Collection Method: Interviews

To generate in-depth and context-specific data, semi-structured interviews was conducted with selected participants from Niger and Kaduna Express way and wards like below. The interview method allows for flexibility, enabling the researcher to probe deeper into emerging themes and clarify responses as needed

Population	Sample Size
Magajin Gari	5
Randagi	5
Kagara Gari	5
Pandogari	5
Buruku	5
Tudun wada	5
Kontagora	5
Barack road	5
Mando Motor Park	10
Minna central Motor Park	10

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3.3 Target Participants

Participants include commercial drivers operating on Kaduna–Niger road, Passengers who frequently travel these routes, transport union officials, security personnel (e.g., police or road safety officers), local community leaders, victims or relatives of victims of road insecurity incidents. This diverse group of informants provided a comprehensive understanding of the effects of insecurity from multiple perspectives.

3.4 Sampling Technique

The study used purposive sampling to select participants who have direct knowledge or experience with road insecurity in the Kaduna–Niger axis. Participants were selected in some wards within both Kaduna and Niger transportation Axis, this technique ensures that only relevant and information-rich cases are included.

3.5 Study Limitations

Despite the relevance of its findings, this study has some limitations that should be acknowledged. The persistent insecurity in the study area limited access to some high-risk road corridors, thereby restricting the scope of data collection. This may have affected the diversity of respondents and prevented direct observation of certain routes most affected by banditry and kidnappings.

Finally, the study was constrained by time and resource limitations, which affected the sample size and depth of fieldwork. Future studies could adopt mixed-method approaches, include a wider geographic scope

3.6 Interview Guide: Insecurity and Road Transportation

Introduction:
Hello, I am conducting a study on the impact of insecurity on road transportation in Niger and Kaduna States. Your responses are confidential.

1. Mobility and Travel

a) How has insecurity affected your movement on Kaduna–Niger or Kaduna–Abuja roads?
b) Are there routes or times you now avoid?

2. Cost of Transportation

a) Has insecurity increased transport fares or operational costs?
b) How has this affected access to goods and services?

3. Psychological Impact

a) How has insecurity affected your sense of safety and well-being?
b) Have you or others relocated due to insecurity?

4. Economic and Social Effects

a) How has insecurity affected trade, farming, or livelihoods?
b) Has access to education, healthcare, or other services been impacted?

5. Delays and Travel Time

a) Have travel times increased due to longer routes or security checkpoints?

b) Do you depend on military or convoy escorts?

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Conducting research on insecurity and its impacts involves sensitive issues, and ethical considerations are critical to protect participants and ensure the integrity of the study. The following ethical principles were observed:

1. **Informed Consent:** All participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and how the data would be used. Participation

was voluntary, and respondents had the right to withdraw at any time without any penalty.

2. **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** Personal information and identities of participants were kept confidential. Pseudonyms or codes were used in place of real names to ensure anonymity. Data was stored securely and only accessed by the research team.

4.0 Data Analysis

Data collected from interviews was transcribed and analyzed. The analysis was conducted manually to ensure rigor and transparency. Thematic Analysis of Result was presented as follows:

P: Describes Participants ranging from respondents within the stated wards and travelers

D: Represents Car Drivers.

Theme 1: Restricted Mobility and Travel Avoidance Many respondents highlighted that insecurity has significantly restricted movement along the Kaduna–Niger road as well as Kaduna Abuja roads. Some travelers who are living comfortably prefer to travel using Airplanes, Others travel by Train. More so, travelers prefer to follow Kaduna-Abuja Road than to travel through Birnin Gwari Kaduna Axis. Fear of being attacked has discouraged both commercial and private transport, some days drivers are not willing to travel due to the dangerous gangs on the road, there is specifications and time for travel, no transportation at particularly at night.

Subthemes:

Avoidance of Danger Zones:

> Now avoid Birnin Gwari entirely; it's like a war zone." Its actually 4 years since I followed that route, I no longer travel to my hometown, I travelled since 2017, the roads are bad and in addition to the kidnappings and killing, I'd rather stay at the town I reside (Participant 1,Particpant 5, Participant 6 ,7 .and 10,29,30,35)

Fear of Night Travel:

Drivers interviewed recounted their experience on how devastating insecurity along Niger and Kaduna roads affects transportation. They maintained that:

> Driving at night is like walking into your grave." In fact from 4pm forget about travelling, I lost 3 of my friends who were drivers. Many of the driver feared

death on these roads. Nobody is safe; not only the passengers that at risk, but equally the drivers. (**Driver 1 , Driver 2 ,Driver 4)**

Reduced Vehicle Availability:

It is observed by the informants that, the reduction of the volume of travel was quite alarming and disruptive in

Driver 3, 4, 8, We used to have four trips a day, now it's just one if at all and we have few Passengers, I changed my route of travel, I now travel to Lagos.

Abandonment of Home Travel:

I was kidnapped once, so I no longer travel to my hometown. I have a family that was kidnapped and was killed (Participant 2, 4, 5,6 8, 11)

Theme 2: Increased Cost of Transportation Participants reported a significant surge in transportation costs, largely driven by heightened security risks. Transporters, fearing attacks or ambushes, are often compelled to take longer, less direct routes or hire private security escorts—both of which substantially increase operational expenses. These additional costs are passed on to passengers and goods transporters, exacerbating the financial burden on already vulnerable populations. The ripple effect has made access to essential services, markets, and safe mobility more difficult, further isolating affected communities.

Subthemes:

Hazard-Based Fare Inflation: Before, we paid ₦1,500. Now it's ₦10,000 or more.

Detour-Driven Fuel Consumption:

Participant 1, "We now go through longer, bushy roads to escape kidnappers. This is the kind of horror we experience every day. It is not easy for all of. Insecurity has affected our livelihoods and personal security"

Security Charges:

"Drivers hire private vigilantes and split the cost among passengers. It is evident that the majority of us that want to use this must hire vigilantes to our various destinations. This has contributed to the rising cost of transportation in the area" (Participant 2,8,9,10)

Scarce food Resources:

"Since food transport is risky, we've stopped seeing some items in town. It is difficult to afford food sustainably by everyone in the area". This was mentioned

> by the people living in the communities with issues of insecurity. (Particpant 15, 20.26,)

Theme 3: Psychological Fear, Trauma, and Displacement: The emotional and psychological toll of the insecurity crisis is profound. Respondents spoke of personal trauma, loss, and relocation as coping mechanisms. Respondents frequently spoke of enduring fear, anxiety, and the lasting scars of trauma. Many have witnessed or experienced violence firsthand—losing family members, homes, or livelihoods. In response, displacement has become both a consequence and a coping mechanism. For some, relocation was a means of survival; for others, it brought new layers of instability and loss. This climate of uncertainty continues to shape mental health, strain social bonds, and erode any sense of normalcy or safety.

Subthemes:

Travel Anxiety and Trauma:

> "I saw people shot in front of me… I still dream about it. Many people were killed in front of drivers. Some of us were killed at spot. It is a sad experience. Life and livelihood are not secured. It is sad and devastating". (Driver 10,8)

Forced Relocation:

> "I no longer stay in my town due to bandits they killed my neighbor. The majority of the households and families sleep in the neighbouring communities due to insecurity. we fear attack, we can be attacked at any moment." (Participant 2,12)

Survivor Avoidance:

> "I was kidnapped once, so I no longer travel to my hometown. There many people with similar experience. Now, our hometown is no longer populated. Many people deserted the town for fear of kidnapping" (Participant 10,18)

Theme 4: Economic and Social Disruption: Insecurity has led to a breakdown of trade, farming, and essential services. Communities report loss of livelihoods and lack of access to food, healthcare, and education. Participants emphasized that insecurity caused by banditry significantly disrupted local economic activities, especially farming. Frequent attacks, kidnappings, and theft in farming communities created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, preventing farmers from accessing their fields safely. Many abandoned or neglected their farms, leading to reduced agricultural output and loss of income. The threat of bandit attacks also hindered transportation of goods to markets, further restricting trade and economic growth. Overall, banditry-induced insecurity deeply affected livelihoods and food security in the affected areas.

Subthemes:

Collapse of Local Trade: “No one brings onions from Niger again, the drivers are too afraid” I travel every week to Kano to Purchase Goods in Bulk before, now I barely travel to Purchase goods” (Participant 1,3,4,6)

Supply Chain Disruption: “We have stopped using some products since the insurgency started it is no longer transported” (Participant 8,13)

Limited Access to Services: “Our children stopped going to school when the bus was attacked”.

Theme 5: Increased Transportation Time and Delays Due to Banditry Insecurity

Participants reported that banditry-related insecurity caused significant delays and increased the length of transportation routes for both people and goods. To avoid areas with high risks of attacks or road ambushes, traders, farmers, and transporters were forced to take longer, less direct routes. This not only increased travel time but also raised transportation costs due to higher fuel consumption and the need for additional security measures. The delays in transporting agricultural produce and other goods led to spoilage, reduced market availability, and loss of income for farmers and traders. These disruptions exacerbated the economic strain on local communities, limiting their access to markets and essential supplies.

Subthemes

Longer Travel Routes. The drivers noted that, the travel time increases due to insecurity and poor condition of road. The pointed thus:

“We travel to Tegina within three hours, now it takes six to eight hours because we avoid certain roads. This has added difficulty to transportation from Kaduna to Kontagora” (Driver 5,8)

Time Wasted at Checkpoints: “There are many security stops which causes so much delay and forced to halt for hours” (Participant 20.25,27)

Convoy Dependence: Sometimes we have to wait until the military is ready to escort us. (Driver 2,7)

4.1 Discussions

Assumption i. Insecurity has affected the frequency and volume of road transportation in Niger and Kaduna States**.**

The findings of this study clearly reveal that insecurity has significantly reduced both the frequency and volume of road transportation in Niger and Kaduna States. Interview data show that persistent fear of banditry, kidnapping, and violent attacks has altered the operational behavior of transporters. Many drivers have reduced their daily trips from several journeys to only one or, in some cases, completely withdrawn from operating on certain routes. Others now avoid specific corridors perceived as high-risk or resort to longer and less efficient alternative routes.

This decline in transport activity has led to restricted mobility for commuters, traders, and commercial drivers, thereby undermining the efficiency of the road transportation system. The findings suggest that insecurity does not only pose a physical threat but also creates psychological fear that discourages movement, disrupts transport planning, and weakens connectivity between communities. Consequently, road transportation—which is critical for economic and social interaction in the study area—has become unreliable and insufficient to meet mobility needs.

Assumption ii. Insecurity has affected the socio-economic impact of road transportation in Niger and Kaduna States.

The study further demonstrates that insecurity has had serious socio-economic consequences on road transportation in the study area. The findings reveal a direct link between insecurity and increased transportation costs, as transport operators impose risk-related charges to compensate for insecurity, longer routes, and additional safety arrangements. These increased costs are ultimately transferred to commuters and traders in the form of higher fares and inflated market prices.

Moreover, livelihoods that depend heavily on road transportation—such as farming, trading, and commercial driving—have been severely disrupted. Many respondents reported reduced income, limited market access, and loss of business opportunities due to restricted movement and declining transport services. In addition, insecurity has negatively affected access to essential social services. The abandonment of schools, reduced hospital visits, and breakdown in service delivery highlight how insecurity extends beyond economic impacts to affect overall social wellbeing.

Overall, the findings indicate that insecurity has weakened trade, disrupted service delivery, and slowed economic activities in Niger and Kaduna States. The socio-economic effects observed in this study emphasize that road transportation insecurity is not only a transport problem but also a broader development challenge that undermines livelihoods, education, healthcare, and regional economic stability.

The findings of this study strongly align with the core assumptions of Human Security Theory by demonstrating that insecurity on road networks in Niger and Kaduna States affects not only transportation systems but also multiple dimensions of human security, including personal, economic, food, health, and community security. Addressing road insecurity is therefore essential not only for transport efficiency but also for protecting human wellbeing and promoting sustainable development

The findings of this study are consistent with earlier research. **Usman and Ogbole (2023)** show that widespread kidnapping and armed robbery in Kaduna State—especially in areas like Birnin Gwari—have made road networks unsafe, restricted mobility, and increased vulnerability among road users, supporting this study's conclusion that insecurity has reduced transport frequency and route usage. Similarly, **Obodo and Onota (2025)** found that persistent banditry along the Abuja–Kaduna Expressway has altered travel behavior, reduced movement, and caused psychological trauma, reinforcing the conclusion that insecurity significantly disrupts road transportation and socio-economic activities in Niger and Kaduna States.

5.0 Conclusion

1. Insecurity along road networks in Niger and Kaduna States has significantly disrupted transportation systems. Frequent incidents of banditry, kidnappings, and violent attacks have forced transport operators to reduce trips, avoid high-risk routes, or abandon certain corridors entirely.
2. The study found that insecurity has significantly reduced the frequency and volume of road transportation in Niger and Kaduna States. Persistent fear of banditry, kidnapping, and violent attacks has forced transport operators to reduce daily trips, avoid high-risk routes, or completely abandon certain road corridors. As a result, mobility has been severely restricted for commuters, traders, and transporters.
3. The findings also reveal that insecurity has had serious socio-economic consequences. Transportation costs have increased due to risk-related charges, longer routes, and security arrangements, leading to higher fares and inflated market prices. Livelihoods dependent on road transport—such as farming, trading, and commercial driving—have been disrupted, while access to education, healthcare, and other social services has declined. Overall, insecurity has weakened trade, service delivery, and economic activities in the study area.
4. The reduction in transport frequency and the risks associated with moving goods have disrupted supply chains, particularly for agricultural produce. As traders avoid insecure routes, the availability of goods in markets has declined, leading to inflation in food and commodity prices. This has negatively affected household welfare and food security, especially among low-income earners.
5. Additionally, the findings revealed a serious deterioration of road infrastructure. Frequent attacks and safety risks prevent routine maintenance and rehabilitation, while abandoned routes receive little or no government attention. Damaged vehicles, illegal checkpoints, and neglect have accelerated road decay along Kaduna and Niger road networks further increasing travel time and vehicle maintenance costs.

5.1 Recommendation

1. To address insecurity on Kaduna- Niger road networks, government and security agencies should strengthen protection along high-risk corridors through regular patrols, rapid response teams, and surveillance systems, while ensuring that perpetrators of banditry, kidnappings, and violent attacks are effectively apprehended and prosecuted. Additionally, transport operators should be supported with safety measures such as convoy arrangements, GPS tracking, and access to real-time security information to restore mobility and safeguard the movement of people and goods.
2. Government should Establish safer alternative routes that bypass high-risk areas to minimize delays caused by insecurity along the Kaduna – Niger road axis and also encourage transport operators to resume normal operations by providing safety assurances and promoting the use of lower-risk alternative routes. More so early warning and Community Alert Systems: Create community-based mechanisms to report and respond to banditry threats promptly, enhancing preparedness and security
3. Government should implement support programs for affected commuters, traders, and transport operators, such as fare subsidies, financial assistance, or livelihood support. Additionally, improve access to essential social services in high-risk areas through mobile service delivery or safe transport initiatives.
4. Government should develop resilient supply chain strategies, including regional storage hubs, safer distribution routes, and coordinated logistics between farmers, traders, and authorities, to ensure steady market supply and stabilize food and commodity prices.
5. Rehabilitation and routine maintenance of critical road networks along Kaduna and Niger state road axis even in high-risk areas, through government intervention, public-private partnerships, and community involvement. Also government should implement measures to prevent illegal checkpoints and reduce travel delays, ensuring safer and more efficient transport.

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