

Unemployment and Insecurity in Nigeria's Geopolitical Zones

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Abstract

Discussions about the causes of insecurity are controversial with, a number of studies professing and counter-professing its linkage to unemployment. In view of this, this study ascertained the relationship between insecurity and unemployment across the different geopolitical zones in Nigeria through establishing the rate of unemployment in each of the 6 geopolitical zones in Nigeria, ascertaining the level of insecurity in each geopolitical zone in Nigeria, ranking unemployment rate and ranking rate of insecurity in each geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Using expo-facto research design, data obtained from National Bureau of Statistics (2020) were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including tables, percentages, pie-charts, bar-charts and graphs. While inferential statistics specifically Z-score, were used to test the study hypothesis. Result established that South-Southern region of Nigeria had the worst unemployment rate (34.66%) while the North-Eastern region of Nigeria had the worst insecurity rate (80%). Z test of hypothesis at 0.05 significant level affirmed that there is no significant relationship between unemployment and insecurity in the different geopolitical zones of Nigeria (1.500, $p < 1.960 > 1.960$). As this study found no significant relationship between unemployment and insecurity in Nigerian geopolitical zones, it is recommended that further studies be conducted on ascertaining the relationship between illiteracy and insecurity in Nigeria geopolitical zones.

Keywords: Federalism, Geopolitical Zones, Insecurity, NBS, Unemployment

Introduction

Unemployment occurs when people above a specified age are neither in paid-employment nor self-employment although they are actively seeking for employment in the period under reference (OECD, 2023). The unemployed are defined by the United States Bureau of Labour Statistics (2023) as people who do not have a job or people who have not actually worked in the past four weeks and are currently available for work. Unemployment according to Edomwonyi-Otu and Edomwonyi-Out (2020) is the third largest problem confronting the Nigeria economy with the exception of power and infrastructure. The most frequent measure of unemployment in a country is the unemployed rate, which is the number of unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force (USBLS, 2023). Unemployment rate in

Nigeria averaged 4.19 percent from 1991 until 2023, reaching an all-time high of 6.00 percent in the fourth quarter of 2020 and a record low of 3.70 percent in the fourth quarter of 2013(www.tradingeconomics.com). According to Aina and Olufemi (2024) Nigeria's unemployment rate surged to 5.0 percent in the third quarter of 2023 from 4.2 percent in the previous quarter. Unemployment rate in a country is often used as a measure of economic performance of a country. Rate of unemployment can as well vary along age, gender and educational attainment lines.

Insecurity has assumed a broader definition than mere feelings of anxiety and the need for protection against military attacks. In modern time, it may be defined as feelings of anxiety among many of the citizens and the continual need for protection against military and non-military attacks, such as the need for protection against physical and cyber criminals, terrorists, other environmental attacks. Over the years, Nigeria has also been challenged with plethora of insecurity ranging from abduction, armed and internet robbery, banditry, insurgency, ritual killings, secessionist agitation, among others (Osimen, Chuke and Elton, 2016). Insecurity poses a great threat to Nigeria's stability, unity and development and to ensure national stability, sovereignty and safety, discourse on root causes of insecurity is a serious cause of research. Among the factors, found in literature, to influence insecurity is unemployment. Findings on relationship between insecurity and unemployment however a subject of continuous research as literature does not concord on the extent or dimension of the relationship between unemployment and insecurity.

Scholars who found significant relationship between unemployment and insecurity report that high, persistent unemployment can signal serious and socio-political upheaval. The reduction or absence of income due to unemployment could bring about different manners of nonconformity to social system by the unemployed, some of which may threaten the security essence of the state. Among the evils of unemployment in a nation are that it exacerbates insecurity of lives and properties (Beveridge, 2004) as it tends to propel unemployed persons into criminality for them to survive economically, thereby increasing anomic reactions against duly recognised social means and goals of accepting the means (Robert K. Merton), creating an atmosphere of insecurity for lives and properties.

Interest in relationship between unemployment, criminality and insecurity is found to be ancient and historical. For example, Ezeajughu (2021), relying on findings of Agnew (1992) and Nilsson and Ageli (2003), proposed that unemployment is capable of frustrating individuals economically, and frustration may, in turn, lead them into violent crime, which may threaten the security of persons and properties. In Nigeria specifically, the effects of unemployment are very severe and aggressive to the citizenry and the economy as a whole. Unemployment is found to contribute immensely to ineffective governance in Nigeria in forms of unproductive labour force (Njoku and Ihugba, 2011); drug addiction, low GDP, political instability, increase in crime and violence in Nigerian geopolitical zones (Nwankwo and Ifejiolor, 2014).

Ojo, Omojuwa, and Oludare (2021), in an empirical analysis of unemployment and crime rate nexus in Nigeria, linked unemployment to worsening insecurity in the country with the conclusion that a

high percentage of unemployment induced a high rate of crime, specifically a 1% rise in unemployment resulting in a 0.0830 increase in crime rate in Nigeria. As coping economic strategy, the unemployed often engage in illegal activities such as human trafficking, organ harvesting, kidnapping, robbery, bunkering and other nefarious activities (Atolagbe, 2022) each of which has negative consequences on ecological security. Specifically, AbdulKareem, Olusegun and Ogunwole (2022) offer a direct link between human trafficking and unemployment and poverty in Afijio Local Government Areas of Oyo State, southwestern Nigeria. Thus, according to these findings, increment in unemployment rate create a criminal culture within some groups of society exacerbating the spate of insecurity in the land.

Other studies, however, did not identify unemployment as a powerful determinant of insecurity. One of such studies is the ancient work of Tarling (1982), which insists that crime often increases during periods of low unemployment and that many crimes are, in fact, committed by employed people who are of school age and employed. Relying on the labeling paradigm, Tarling (1982) espoused that the unemployed, due to their economic incapacitation, live in poverty and have little economic power. As a result, so they are often criminalized for actions that are commonly ignored by police when perpetuated by the employed who have money to influence the law. In a related submission, Savarin (2012) – the former Minister for National Security of the Dominican City – disclaimed unemployment as a cause of crime and insecurity at Dominican city. While admitting that unemployment is a concern, the minister insisted that it cannot be blamed as the main reason why people engage in criminal activities that are capable of causing tension in the society. He cited several police reports where employed persons allegedly stole from their employer. This, according to him, raises the question as to whether unemployment causes criminality and insecurity. If employment can be used to commit crime, it cannot, therefore, be wholeheartedly advocated that unemployment is a reason for criminality and insecurity in a country. Results from cited and other studies on insecurity and unemployment allow for conclusions in their own right, but are contradictory when examined from a more abstract point of view; and hence open a study gap for further research on unemployment and insecurity. In view of this, this study attempts to verify the relationship between unemployment and insecurity in using secondary data collected in respect of unemployment and insecurity in the 6 geo-political zones of Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are, however, to:

- i. Establish the rate of unemployment in each geo-political zone in Nigeria.
- ii. Ascertain the level of insecurity in each geo-political zone in Nigeria.
- iii. Rank unemployment rate in each geo-political zone in Nigeria.
- iv. Rank level of insecurity in each geo-political zone of Nigeria.

Moreover, the study also tested the hypothesis which states:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria's six geopolitical zones.

Methodology

This study ascertained the relationship between regional unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria. The research adopted an ex post facto. Expo-facto design is a quasi-experimental study that examines how an independent variable, present prior to the study in the participants, affects a dependent variable. This was chosen because the variables in the research (unemployment & insecurity) have already occurred and the researcher cannot manipulate data on the already occurred phenomena. The main aim of the research is to determine the effect and relationship between unemployment and insecurity across the six regions of Nigeria.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1 Unemployment Rate in Nigerian Geopolitical Zones (n=6)

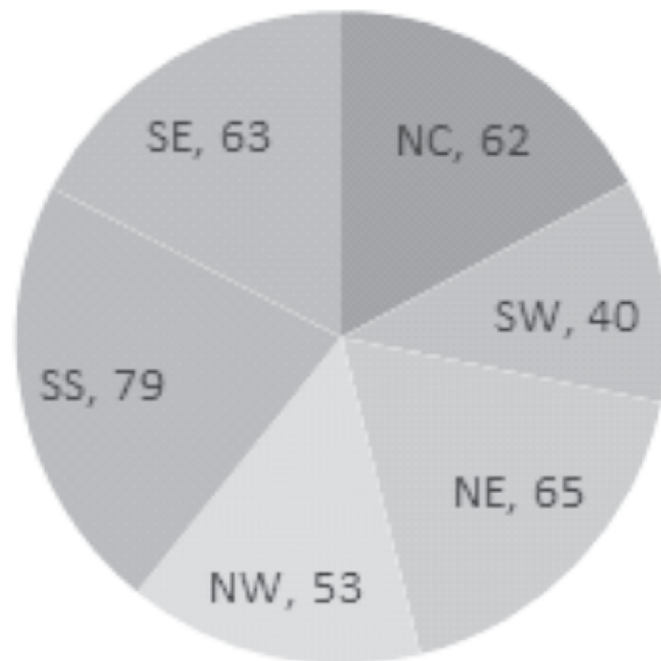
REGION AND STATES	UNEMPLOYMENT (%)	REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT	DEGREE
Northcentral Benue Kogi Kwara Nasarawa Niger Plateau FCT	22 38 14 16 35 36 29	27.14	62°
Northeast Adamawa Bauchi Borno Gombe Taraba Yobe	30 21 19 34 40 28	28.66	65°
Northwest Jigsaw Kaduna Kano Katsina Kebbi Sokoto Zamfara	21 40 30 20 18 17 17	23.29	53°
Southeast Abia Anambra Ebonyi Enugu Imo	37 12 15 25 49	27.6	63°
South-South Akwa Ibom Bayelsa	46 29	34.66	79°

Cross River	31		
Delta	40		
Edo	19		
Rivers	43		
Southwest		17.16	40°
Ekiti	15		
Lagos	19		
Ogun	17		
Ondo	20		
Osun	15		

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2020

***Degree** – a unit of measurement of angle in a circumference

Fig. 1: A Pie Chat of Unemployment Rate in Nigerian Geopolitical Zones



Source: NBS (2020)

Table 1 and its pie chat present the unemployment rate in each geopolitical zone of Nigeria. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the six states and the FCT in the North Central Region of Nigeria have the following unemployment statistics; Benue (22%), Kogi (38%) Kwara (14%), Nasarawa (16%), Niger (35%), Plateau (36%), and FCT (29%). This gives a regional mean unemployment rate of 27.14%.

The table also presents unemployment statistics of the Northeastern region of Nigeria. It is seen that, Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe States have 30%, 21%, 19%, 34%, 40% and 28% respectively as unemployment statistics. The mean regional unemployment for the Northeastern region of Nigeria is 28.66%. Also, table 1 and its pie-chat present unemployment statistics in the Northwestern Region of Nigeria. It is seen that the seven (7) states located in the region have the

following unemployment statistics according to the National Bureau of Statistics. Jigawa (21), Kaduna (40), Kano (39), Katsina (20), Kebbi (18), Sokoto (17) while Zamfara (17), giving a mean statistic of unemployment in the North Western region to be 23.29.

The table also presents unemployment statistics in the Southeastern Region of Nigeria. It is seen that Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states have 37, 12, 15, 25 and 49 percent respectively as unemployment statistics. The mean regional unemployment in the Southeastern region of Nigeria is 27.6 percent.

The unemployment Statistics in the South-Southern region of Nigeria is also presented by the table and its bar chart. It is seen that, Akwa-Ibom has 46%, Bayelsa has 29%, Cross River has 31%, Delta has 40%, Edo has 19% and Rivers State has 43%, giving a mean statistic of unemployment in the South-South region of Nigeria as 34.66 percent.

Table 1 also presents the unemployment statistics in the Southwestern region in Nigeria. The states of Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo have unemployment rates of 15%, 19%, 17%, 20%, 15% and 17% respectively, yielding a mean regional unemployment rate of 17.16%.

The inference from these findings is that the South-Southern geopolitical zone of Nigeria with a 34.66% national unemployment statistics is the region worst hit by the incidence of unemployment in Nigeria. The relationship between poverty, a fundamental cause and consequence of unemployment and criminality is discussed in literature. Orhero (2019) in Poverty, Unemployment and National Insecurity in Nigeria's Fourth Republic forecasted a direct link between the rate of unemployment and the likelihood of insecurity in a nation. Invariably, this study, having established the worst incidence of unemployment in South-Southern geopolitical zone, anticipate that the South-Southern geopolitical zone would have official statistics of worst insecurity in Nigeria.

In view of this, Table 2 presents vital statistics on the rate of insecurity across the geopolitical regions in Nigeria.

Table 2: Insecurity Index in Nigerian Geopolitical Zones (n=6)

REGION	SAFETY PERCEPTION INDEX	% SPI
North Central	0.23	23
North East	0.20	20
North West	0.28	28
South East	0.29	29
South-South	0.35	35
South West	0.53	53

Source: Global Terrorism Watch, 2020

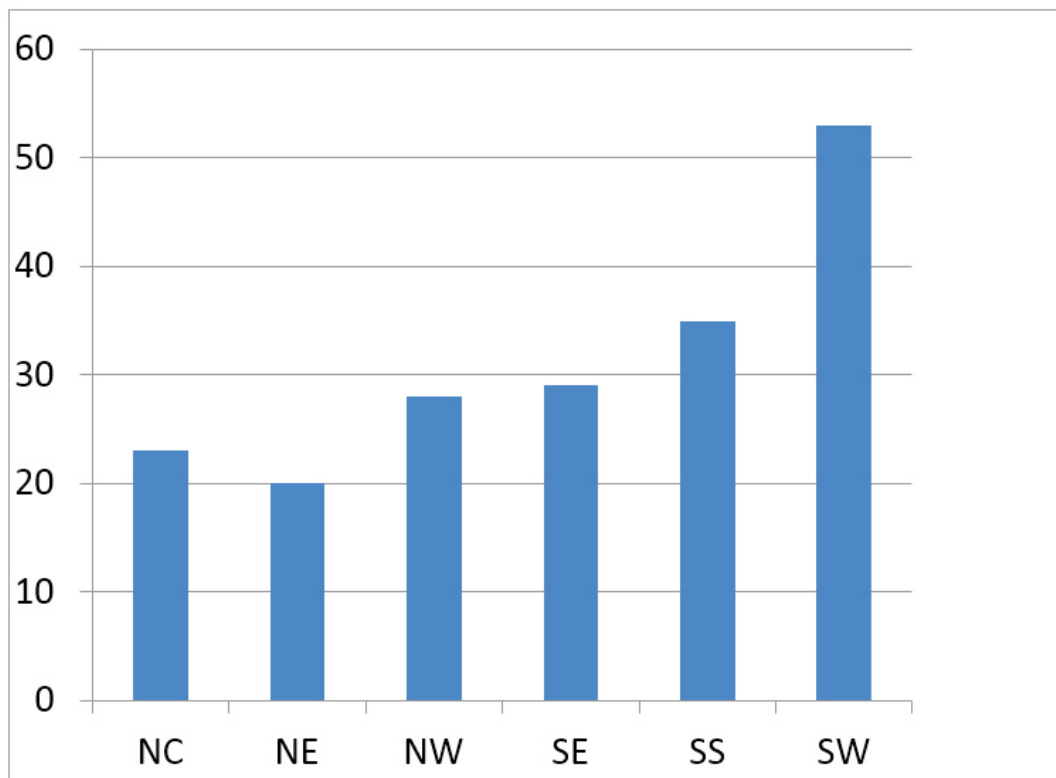


Table 2 and its bar chart present the insecurity index in Nigerian geopolitical zones, measured using the Safety Perception Index (SPT) as reported by the Global Terrorism Watch (2020). It is observed that, the people in Northcentral region of Nigeria perceived themselves and their properties safe at 0.23 SPI. By implication, the regional criminality index is 0.77 or 77%.

Also, the people of the Northeastern region of Nigeria are reported to perceive their safety index at 0.20 SPI. By implication, their insecurity index is 0.80 or 80%. Data for Northwestern region establish the region's Safety Perception Index to be 0.28. The meaning of this is that the chance of insecurity in that region as inferred from Global Terrorism Watch (2020) data is 0.72 or 72%.

The Southeastern region people of Nigeria are also reported by table 2 to perceive their safety index at 0.29 or 29 SPI. This implies that the regional insecurity index is 0.71 or 71%. It is also seen that the people of the South-Southern region of Nigeria perceive their safety index at 0.35 Safety Perception Index. By implication, the regional insecurity Index is 0.65 or 65%.

The table also presents data for the Southwestern region, establishing the region's Safety Perception Index at 0.53. This means that the chance of insecurity in the Southwestern region is 0.47 or 47%.

Table 3: Ranking of Unemployment Rate in each Geopolitical Zones in Nigeria

Region	Percentage of unemployment	Rank
Northcentral	27.14	4th
Northeast	28.66	2nd
Northwest	23.29	5th
Southeast	27.60	3rd
South-South	34.66	1st
Southwest	17.16	6 th

Source: Researchers’ imputation, 2023

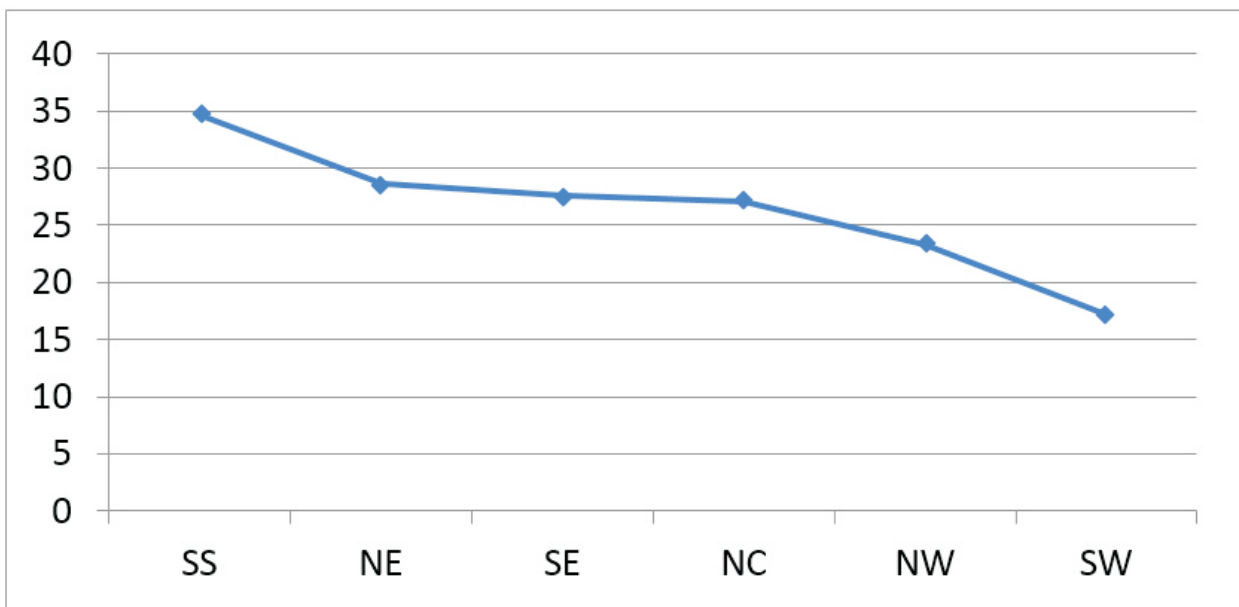


Table 3 and its graph present the ranking of unemployment rates in each geopolitical zone of Nigeria based on data from National Bureau of Statistics (2020). It is evident that the South-Southern geopolitical zone of Nigeria tops the statistics of unemployment in the country with 34.66%, North-Eastern region of Nigeria ranks the second of unemployment statistics with 28.66%, the North-Eastern region of Nigeria ranks second in unemployment statistics with 28.66%, followed by the south-eastern region at third with 27.60%, followed by the South-Eastern region at third with 27.60%. The North-Central geopolitical region ranks fourth in unemployment statistics with 27.14%, while the North-Western region ranks fifth with 23.29%. Lastly, the Southwestern geopolitical region of Nigeria ranks sixth in unemployment statistics with 17.16%.

Table 4: Ranking Insecurity Rate in each Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria

Region	Percentage	Rank
Northcentral	23	5 th
Northeast	20	6 th
Northwest	28	4 th
Southeast	29	3 rd
South-South	35	2 nd
Southwest	53	1 st

Source: Researchers’ imputation, 2023

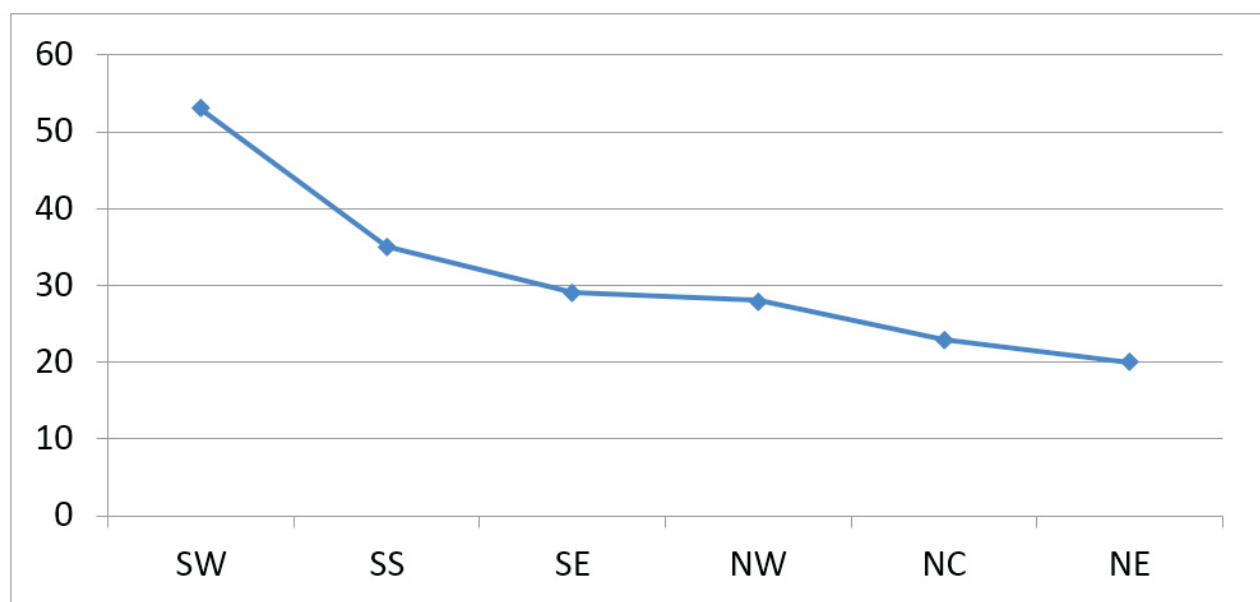


Table 4 and its graph present the ranking of incidence of insecurity across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The index used for ranking is the Safety Perception Index of people in the region, as computed by the Global Terrorism Watch, an international organisation. The index provides a comprehensive assessment of worries and experiences of risk of becoming victims of any crime across 121 countries. It is seen that the Northeastern region of Nigeria ranks 6th in Nigeria's Safety Perception Index, which means that it is the worst unsecured region against criminality in Nigeria, as perceived by the people who reside in the region. The Northcentral region follows, thereafter the Northwestern region. By implication, the worst insecure regions in Nigeria are the Northern regions, while the Southern regions as established using Safety Perception Index to be relatively more secured than any of the regions in the North against criminal behaviour. The Southwestern region is ranked to be the most secured region in Nigeria followed by the South-southern and the Southeastern region. The deadly activities of Boko Haram, with its dreaded links with ISWA and ISIS have contributed to making the Northeastern region globally recognised as the most insecure region in Nigeria. While the frequent inter-religious violence

in Kano, Plateau and sometimes in Kaduna and Benue States might have contributed in labelling the Northcentral and Northwestern regions as unsafe.

The Southeastern states come next in terms of regional insecurity, and this may not be unconnected with the activities of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its allies, which seems to be forming a guerilla government in the region. While each of the South-Southern and Southwestern regions has its own nationalistic agitative groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta led by Alhaji Mujahideen Asari Dokubo and the Oodua People's Congress led by Are Ganni Adams respectively, their activities were relatively less criminalistic in their respective region.

Test of Hypothesis

This study puts forward the following hypothesis;

Ho: There is no significant relationship between unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria

Alternative Hypothesis

Hi: There is significant relationship between unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria.

The study used inferential statistics of Z-Score to test the presented hypothesis. The Z-Score is denoted as $Z =$

$$Z = \frac{P_n - P_o}{\frac{P_o(1-P_o)}{n}}$$

Where $Z =$ Test statistics

$n =$ Sample size

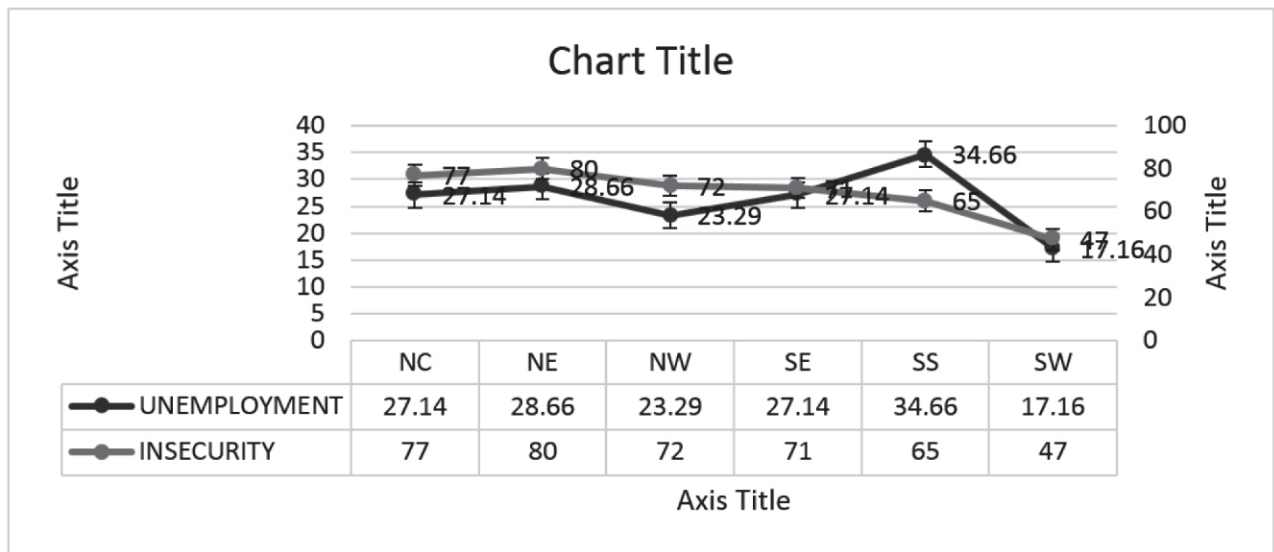
$P_o =$ Null hypothesis

Decision Rule

In line with standard practice, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis - that is if Z_c is < 1.645 , hence H_o is rejected if $P < -1.960$ if $Z > 1.960$

Table 4.3.3

	Unemployment	Insecurity
Mean	0.3121	0.5464
Medium	1.3023	1.5045
Maximum	3.6306	2.9619
Minimum	3.0242	-1.0049
Standard Deviation	1.5000	1.5000
Skewness	1.1044	0.1044
Kurtosis	3.3930	4.9595
Jarque-Bera	0.6729	1.4351
Probability	0.5031	0.4507
Sum	126.3304	54.2170
Sum of Deviation	57.7964	82.0313
Total number observations	06	06



The above graph presents and compares the curves of insecurity and unemployment rates across Nigerian geopolitical zones. It is evident that the chance of insecurity is at its worse in Northeastern Nigeria, but the region is not the worst in terms of unemployment. The worst point of unemployment is the South Southern region, which has a relatively lower rate of insecurity of lives and properties. The relationship between insecurity and unemployment in other geopolitical zones of Nigeria (except in the Southwestern region where there is a consistent, although not necessarily concomitant, relationship between insecurity and unemployment exists) is found to be inconsistent. By implication, this study's finding is a departure from other findings in literature, such as Goldstein

(2005) and Adekoya & Razak (2018) which suggest that unemployment or poverty is a significant influencer of insecurity, conflict or terrorism in Nigeria. In view of this, the study opens increased roads for more critical further studies on the concept of poverty, unemployment and insecurity, conflict, and terrorism across Nigerian geopolitical zones.

Summary

This study ascertained the relationship between unemployment and insecurity across the geopolitical zones in Nigeria. In view of this, objectives were developed, a hypothesis was tested, various reviews, tests and analyses were carried out, and the following findings were made:

The rate of unemployment in Nigerian geopolitical zones were as follows; Northcentral (27.14), Northeast (28.66), North-West (23.29), Southeast (27.6), South-South (34.66) and Southwest (17.16) hence the South-Southern region is the region with the highest rate of unemployment in Nigeria.

The Safely Perception Index in Nigerian geopolitical zones were as follows; Northcentral (23), Northeast (20), Northwest (28), Southeast (29), South-South (35) and Southwest (53) hence the Northeastern region is the region with the worst experience of insecurity in Nigeria.

Ranking of the rate of unemployment in Nigeria reveals that the South-Southern region comes first, Northeastern region comes second, Southeastern region comes third, Northcentral region comes forth, Northwestern region comes fifth and Southwestern region comes sixth in National Statistics of unemployment as of 2020.

Ranking of the rate of insecurity and criminality in Nigeria also reveals that the Northeastern region comes first, Northcentral region comes second, Northwestern region comes third, Southeastern region comes forth, South-Southern region comes fifth and Southwestern region comes sixth.

Conclusion

The study ascertained the relationship between unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria and concluded that there is no significant relationship between unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria geopolitical zones.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are put forward; The unemployment index in each of the Nigeria's geopolitical zones is found to be higher than the international minimum tolerance index of 15%. Hence, the government is advised to urgently embark on ISI - Import Substitution Industrialisation to massively create direct and indirect employment in each of the six geopolitical zones, with particular focus on South-South region.

SPI in each of the Nigeria's geopolitical zones is found to be higher than the international minimum index of 5%. Hence, the government is advised to invest heavily in fortifying, training, and disciplining the Nigerian Armed Forces in order to declare a true and comprehensive war against terrorism, especially in the North Eastern Nigeria

As this study found no significant relationship between unemployment and insecurity in Nigerian geopolitical zones, which seems to go against *a priori*, it is recommended that further studies be conducted to verify the relationship between illiteracy and insecurity in Nigerian geopolitical zones. Additionally, it is suggested that further research on the relationship between unemployment and insecurity be conducted using primary and small datasets.

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