

An Explorative Study of Economic Hardship, Social Vices, Security threat and Nigerian Nationhood

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Abstract

The global economy presently suffers a lot of setbacks as exemplified by skyrocketing cost of living, health issues, economic downturn and associated drop in per capital income across nation, continents and the global community. This study explores the implications of economic hardship, social vices and security threat on Nigerian nation. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design using primary and secondary sources of literature with a population cutting across Academics/Public Servants; Artisans/Technocrats; Traders; Farmers; and, Transporters in five locations of Igboora; Ibadan; Oyo; Ogbomoso, and Saki out of which a sample size of 150 participants selected through purposive sampling technique of 30 participants each were drawn. Data were collected through structured questionnaire and analyzed through weighted means and rank order statistics. The study revealed prevalence of economic hardship, security threat and social vices with all the items greater than the Criterion Mean Weight of 2.50 and Grand Mean of 2.97; infrastructural deficit, widespread corruption as well as government obnoxious policies (3.03, 2.60, and 3.07) ranked 2nd 3rd and first respectively as part of influencing factor of economic hardship, security threat and social vices in Nigeria; close relationship exist between economic hardship, security threat and social vices in Nigeria with Mean Weight of 3.20, 2.90 and 2.87 ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively above the criterion Mean Weight of 2.50. Hence, total overhauling of the nation's economy, security architecture, citizens disposition, social protection programmes, food production capable of growing the economy among others, need be put in place by policy makers toward realization of sustainable economy and sustainable development goals.

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Introduction

The Yoruba saying, ‘bi oode o dun, b’igbe ni’gboroo ri’ literally translating into unpalatable situation at home as a mirror of non-satisfactory nature of the society is a truism of the prevalent situation in the Nigerian society in the present dispensation. The situation exemplified by the economic woes betiding the nation devilled all manners of boundaries, religious, creed, profession, class, status, among others. Thus, the saying, ‘the rich also cry’ clearly define the nation with respect to food scarcity, economic hardship, security imbroglio, restrictions, cut in social activities, exacerbated health decline; reduced development prospects, escalating human inhuman treatment and all sorts of social injustices. Thus, the reminiscence of a number of evergreen songs of age long stares citizens at face in the current dispensation. From Juju to Apala, Fuji, Pop Music as well as religious songs, Ewi, among others (Oladiti et al., 2024a) have one time or the other berated economic hardship, security threat, food scarcity as well as social vices, with some spanning two to three decades ago. Little wonder the continued mass exodus of Nigerians in search of greener pastures elsewhere.

It is on record that the country who by her resource prowess, in the past earned the appellation, the ‘Giant of Africa’ coupled with her demographic dividend (Adesina, 2022; Okonjo-Iweala, 2024) is presently confronted with a number of sustainable development challenges. Prominent among such is economic hardship, security threat, social injustices manifesting in all forms of social vices from top the least. The said situation is not unconnected with policy summersault, leadership and followership disposition, to mention few which continue to worsen the situation with only a handful exempted. Berating the situation, World Bank (2020) the nation's economy, plagued by unemployment, poverty, inequality, and social injustice, has led to economic crises and increased social vices like corruption, human trafficking, drug abuse, cybercrime, and data breaches, exacerbated by unfriendly policies and increasing economic hardship.

The global program aims to achieve economic development and sustainable nations through the 17 cardinal goals and 169 targets, supported by 182 nations (Oladiti 2024b) is a mirage if the situation is not given the immediate attention it deserved. The conference theme emphasizes the importance of education, employability, and sustainability for development. This study examines the relationship between economic hardship, security threats, and social vices to save the nation from current predicaments.

Statement of the Problem

At this juncture, it need be reiterated that despite a number of extant programmes both at the national, continent and global levels, there have been rising cases of economic comatose, security threat as well as increasing rate of social vices among the rank and files, government, non-governmental organizations, public sectors, individuals, policy makers, to mention few. For instance, a number of the SDGs if not all, advocated for poverty elimination, dealing with hunger decisively, finding recourse to employment issues, safe and secure environment, productive education programmes, among others, yet, just about six years to the 15-year time frame to actualize the 17 Goals and the 169 Targets (Oladiti 2024b; Oladiti, 2023, Omolewa, 2019), there seems to be no respite in sight for Nigeria to meet up with the set time frame. This is despite her humongous diverse resources (Adesina, 2022 that made Ubong (2013) to describe Nigeria as a 'paradox of a nation too rich to be poor and too poor to be rich' This calls for a concerted efforts at addressing the raging storm to set the country on the pedestal of growing economy. Consequently, in a bid to address the major crux of the study a number of probing questions basic among others, the following: To what extent is economic hardship, social vices and security threat an endemic phenomenon in Nigeria? What are the factors responsible for the spate of economic hardship among Nigerian populace? Is there any relationship between economic hardship, social vices and security threat in Nigeria?

Literature Review

Nigerian Economy in Perspective

Oladiti highlights Nigeria's paradox of being rich and poor, with economic problems and instability due to societal hierarchy. Despite its oil wealth, Nigeria often deprives its citizens of global opportunities like global scholarship. Despite its vast resources, Nigeria's economy remains relatively stable with a per capita income of \$2,083, leading to its removal from the list of emerging markets by Morgan. Oladiti et al (2019) describe these resources as the hub of national growth and development.

Nigeria, with its economic vantage position, is actively striving to position itself among the first 20 global economies through successive governments. Nigeria's enviable position in the global food hub market is attributed to its vast resources, economic opportunities, abundant land, and cheap labour, according to Adesina (2013). Speaking further on the nation's economic scorecard, Buhari (2020) hammered on the need to both harnessing as well as optimizing the nation's tremendous human and natural resources for the purpose of attaining the nation's tall dream of ranking among the top 20 economies of the world, process of which is expected to lift 100 million Nigerians out of poverty in 10 years.

Nigeria, despite its diverse natural resource distribution, has the potential for national development. The nation's rich diversity, including people, cultures, religions, mineral resources, oil and gas, and biodiversity, can drive a growing economy and sustainable development. However, the nation's economic situation is ambivalent, with many facing pains and agonies. The paradoxical practice of Nigeria, leading to economic downturns and hardships, has led to a lack of ecstasy and a lack of national development. Despite the world's recognition of Nigeria's economic buoyancy and growth prosperity, the current economic climate in Nigeria is devoid of ecstasy and lacks a clear vision for national development.

Causes of Economic Hardship in Nigeria

Economic hardship in Nigeria is a result of various factors including governance, unemployment, poverty, corruption, foreign relations, productivity, technology, attitude, money laundering, illegal activities, infrastructural deficit, inflation, human resource development inadequacy, health structure, education, social institutions, insecurity, crime, GDP stagnation, government ineptitude, lack of adequate development plans, population growth without productivity, societal factors, economic recession, non-development of indigenous industries, high importation, violence, youth unemployment, neglect of civic duties, crime rates, monetary policies, and resource misuse (Oladiti, 2024).

Empirical studies corroborated the above. For instance, Government related factors top the list with studies fingering a number of governments ineptitudeness as the major driver of the nation's economic hardship. To this, Adesina (2013) contended the country's incessant importation of food supposed to be produced enmasse to feed Africa as a continent. Adams (2019) identifies ineffective leadership, corruption, oil dependency, inflation, unemployment, government policies, monetary constraints, infrastructural constraints, power outages, inadequate health facilities, and insecurity as contributing factors to Nigeria's economic hardship.

More so, studies have canvassed the issue of governance in terms of resource management failure; obnoxious policies and attendant effects, corruption, over-dependency on oil, monolithic and one -dimensional economy, government corruption and foreign investment among others (Ikpor, 2015; Nwogu, 2014; Wike, 2016; Oladiti et al, 2016; Adesina, 2022; Aladekugbe, 2020; WhatsApp World 365, 2022). Odunsi (2017) also confirmed that Nigeria occupied 28th position of the most corrupt 46 nations of the world in the 2017 Transparency International ranking; this is in the event of the nation's consecutive ranking among the top 10 countries for over a period of 10 years.

Studies have also enlisted unemployment as the core of economic hardship in Nigeria, general unemployment and youth unemployment inclusive. In a graphical illustration of unemployment

rates between year 2000 and 2012, NBS (2011) revealed that unemployment rate between 2000 and 2011 stood at 31.1%, 13.6%, 12.6%, 14.8%, 13.4%, 11.9%, 13.1%, 14.6%, 14.9%, 19.7%, 21.1% and 23.9% respectively while for 2012, the unemployment stood at 24% (Adebo et al, 2019). Further breakdown of unemployment rate between 2008 and 2018 according to NBS (2018) indicated 14.2% as against 13.9% between various quarters of 2016 with unemployment rate rising to 4.0% from initial 0.2% in 2018 with estimated 6.6 million and jobless rate of 3.8% in May 2018 as against 4.3% in 2017 and rose to 23.1% with 20.9 million jobless in the 3rd quarter of 2018. Trading Economics (2019) indicated that youth unemployment rate increased to 23.10% in the 3rd quarter of 2018, youth unemployment in Nigeria averaged 12.31% from 2006 to 2018.

Nigeria faces a pervasive problem of unemployment, affecting a larger percentage of the population. The country faces economic hardships, with declining GDP, debt, and infrastructural deficits. With 208.8 million people, Nigeria faces economic hardship due to population growth without infrastructural facilities, jobs, and increased productivity. The country is also characterized by stark poverty, with the highest number of out-of-school children and the highest number of private jet owners. Despite abundant resources, Nigeria is currently in a technical recession, with a decline in GDP, employment, and trade. The Nigerian government must prioritize addressing this pervasive problem to ensure the well-being of its larger percentage of the population.

Adesina (2022) compared Nigeria's per capital income to Singapore's at 1965, with Singapore having \$517 and Nigeria at \$1,400. Akano (2022) noted significant increases in GDP and per capital income between 1971 and 2022, with UAEs at \$40,000 and South Korea at \$28,075 and Singapore at \$61,000. Nigeria's GDP generated just \$400 billion, causing inflation, reduced investment, economic hardship, worker sacking, high unemployment, and price hikes of basic amenities. Branch and Ibara (2019) highlight Nigeria's economic hardship due to deteriorating trade terms, rising inflation, inadequate leadership, trade imbalance, declining foreign investment, and economic uncertainty. Nwadinobi (2016) highlights the power sector's struggle for survival, affecting domestic production and

foreign companies' business. These factors contribute to the nation's challenges in job, income, healthcare, investment, and energy supply.

The World Bank estimates citizens spend N750 out of every N1,000 on health, exacerbated by the country's poor health. Chima predicts a 2.3% decline in growth in 2016, with non-oil sector growth slowing from 3.6% in 2015 to 3.5% in 2017. Nwogu (2014) highlighted Nigeria's economic hardship, despite abundant resources and Goldman Sachs ranking among the N 11 countries. The love of money is the root of all evils in Nigerian society, exacerbating economic hardship and social vices. The inverse relationship between the three is evident in the presentation.

Economic hardship, social vices, Security threat and Nigerian Nation

Economic hardship, social vices, and insecurity are interconnected and have a significant impact on the Nigerian nation. The UNESCO mandates a 26% annual budgetary allocation to education, which is crucial for achieving national objectives. However, Nigeria's education system is facing challenges due to economic hardship, social vices, and insecurity. Long-term education in Nigeria is hindered by lack of resources, economic uncertainty, insecurity issues, food insecurity, financial problems, threatened jobs, healthcare, energy supplies, and investment. Economic insecurity is a threat to higher education, preventing citizens and the nation's global economy participation. Factors affecting education and delivery include violent attitudes, societal disconnection, and national insecurity. Nigeria's socio-economic development is threatened by adverse business conditions, insecurity, and deteriorating exchange rates. The misuse of internet access, particularly among phone users, contributes to the country's problems, with 93.3% of the population having access to the internet.

Economic hardship, social vices, and insecurity in Nigerian society are intertwined, according to Kingsley Moghalu. Nigeria is currently grappling with crimes such as kidnapping, abductions, robberies, political violence, corruption, looting of the nation's treasury, ghost workers, mounting unpaid salaries, banditry, Boko Haram insurgency, ritual killings, and an increase in IDPs. These

issues have led to emotional imbalance and psychological trauma, particularly in the North/Western region, preventing foreign investors from establishing businesses. The 2022 Christmas festive period witnessed endemic economic hardship, social vices, and insecurity, with hotels, event planners, and musicians losing their livelihoods. The money meant for national development is now diverted to wars, conflict management, violence prevention, and disaster management.

Economic hardship is a significant issue in Nigerian society, driven by social problems such as rape, high disregard for fellow citizens' well-being, joblessness, and impotent government. Nigeria's security challenges include kidnapping, farmer clashes, Boko Haram insurgency, conflict, robbery, and infrastructural decay, which discourage foreign investment and contribute to the nation's predicament (Aladekugbe, 2017). Economic hardship and social vices are interconnected, causing endemic corruption that infiltrates political and economic sectors. Corruption is a major challenge in Nigeria, ranking 144th out of 177 countries on the Corruption Perception Index, highlighting the interconnected nature of these issues. Similarly, from a study conducted by Groschl (2017), it was found out that a linkage exists between corruption and education with untold effects on economic growth as well as investment discouragement in the nation. The more reason why Itasanmi (2019) averred that Nigerian society pervade high corruption ranking with untoward effects on the nation as well as those in Diaspora with foreigners having the notion that all Nigerians are inherently corrupt. Nigeria's military formation's ineptitude and a collaborative stance are contributing to corruption, insecurity, and economic duodenum. To this, a GAHTO officer, Michael (2022) questions why kidnappers can collect ransoms without effective security formation. The nation's economic mess and low global economic indices hinder the attainment of sustainable Development Goals. The relationship between economic hardship, social vices, and security threat in Nigeria is unclear, and the need for sustainable solutions is crucial.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a population spanning among others, Academics/Public Servants; Artisans/Technocrats; Traders; Farmers; and, Transporters across five locations of Oyo State, South-west Nigeria Senatorial Districts (Igboora; Ibadan; Oyo; Ogbomoso, and Saki) out of which a sample size of 150 participants selected through purposive sampling technique of 30 participants each. Data were collected through structured questionnaire. Quantitative analysis of simple percentages, mean score, mean weight, and rank order were deployed for data analysis.

Results and Discussion

Presentation of results here is based on the research questions generated for the study. Criterion mean of 2.50 is set to determine the extent of agreement or otherwise with the items.

Table 1: Participants' Demographic Data

S/N	VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
1.	Academics/Public Servants	22	14.67
2.	Artisans/Technocrats	36	24.00
3.	Traders	32	21.33
4.	Farmers	40	26.67
5.	Transporters	20	13.33
	Total	150	100

Table 1 indicated that Farmers, Artisans/Technocrats and Traders has the highest frequency (40, 26.67%; 36, 24.00%; 32, 21.33%) respectively followed by Academic/Public Servants and Transporters (22, 14.67; 20, 13.33) respectively across the sampled areas for the study.

Research Question 1: To what extent is economic hardship, social vices and security threat endemic phenomena in Nigeria?

Table 2: Analysis of Prevalence of Economic hardship, social vices and Security threat in Nigeria

<u>S/N</u>	<u>VARIABLES</u>	<u>MEAN SCORE</u>	<u>RANK</u>
1.	High crime rates manifesting in social vices, kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism are common phenomena that ranks the nation high in Global Crime statistics.	3.07	1 st
2.	Over 40% of Nigerians are living below the poverty line coupled with security threats from Boko Haram, banditry and herdsmen-farmer conflicts leading to loss of lives and displacement are indices of economic hardship.	2.80	3 rd
3.	Endemic corruption, nepotism and menace of social vices have perpetuated economic hardship in Nigeria.	3.03	2 nd
Grand Mean		2.97	

From Table 2, participants indicated a clear expression of the endemic nature of the trio of economic hardship; social vices and security threat in Nigeria with all the items greater than the criterion mean weight of 2.50 and Grand Mean of 2.97. People living below poverty line constitute 40% coupled with threatened security and growing rate of social vices in all facets (3.07, 3.03 and 2.80 ranked 1st to 3rd) respectively. Findings here further buttressed the submissions from some previous studies that attested to the prevalence of economic hardship, security threat and social vices in the nation (Adesina, 2022; Buhari, 2020; Odunsi, 2017; Okonjo-Iweala, 2024; Oladitiet al., 2024b).

Research Question 2: What are the factors responsible for the spate of economic hardship among Nigerian populace?

Table 3: Analysis of Factors Responsible for the Spate of Economic Hardship among Nigerian Populace

S/N	VARIABLES	MEAN SCORE	RANK
1.	Poor infrastructural developments such as roads, ports, and electricity tend to increase production costs and discourages foreign investment, limits economic growth that results in economic hardship.	3.03	2 nd
2.	Widespread corruption and mismanagement of public funds associated with lack of investment in critical sectors such education, healthcare and infrastructure do exacerbate economic hardship in Nigeria.	2.60	3 rd
3.	Inconsistent monetary policies and high inflation rates which have eroded purchasing power, savings, and increased cost of living, among others are responsible for the spate of economic hardship.	3.07	1 st
Grand Mean		2.90	

Table 3 revealed that infrastructural deficit, widespread corruption as well as government obnoxious policies (3.03, 2.60, and 3.07) ranked 2nd, 3rd and first respectively as part of influencing factor of economic hardship, security threat and social vices in Nigeria. Studies have consistently fingered such factors as responsible for the spate of economic hardship and associated security threat and social vices (Adebo & Olanipekun, 2019; Adesina, 2022; Adesina, 2022; Akano, 2021; Aladekugbe, 2020; Branch & Ibara, 2019).

Research Question 3: Is there any relationship between economic hardship, social vices and security threat in Nigeria?

Table 3: Analysis of Relationship between Economic Hardship, Social vices and Security threat in Nigeria

S/N	VARIABLES	MEAN SCORE	RANK
1.	Corruption undermines security agencies, enabling security threats like terrorism and banditry to thrive while joblessness contributes to radicalization and recruitment into terrorist groups.	2.87	3 rd
2.	Economic hardship makes individuals vulnerable to exploitation by criminals and terrorists perpetuating security threats.	3.20	1 st
3.	Engagement in social vices like theft, robbery, and kidnapping, among others are resultant of economic hardship in Nigeria.	2.90	2 nd
	Grand Mean	2.99	

Findings from Table 3 revealed that a close relationship exists between economic hardship, security threat and social vices in Nigeria with item 2, 3 and 1 (3.20, 2.90 and 2.87 Mean Weight) respectively ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd above the criterion Mean Weight of 2.50. This finding is consistent with studies that identified security threat and social vices as multiplier effects of economic hardship in the nation among others (Aladekugbe, 2017; Itasanmi, 2019; and Oladiti, 2024).

Conclusion

A panoramic view of this study is an indication of the prevalence of economic hardship, social vices and security threat with concomitant multiplier effects on all strata of the society. This, in no small measure is of grave implications for the nationhood in the comity of other nations. Skyrocketing cost of living emanating from government obnoxious policies, endemic corruption, mismanagement of resources, policy summersault, undesirable attitude, increased poverty rate as well as rising youth unemployment is

generating untoward dispositions on the citizens culminating social vices and threat to the nation's security architecture at large.

Recommendations

In the event of the foregoing as captured in this study calls for urgent attention on the stakeholders and all and sundry to ensure that all hands are on deck to confront the trio of economic hardship, social vices and security threat headlong. It is therefore incumbent that a total overhauling of the nation's economy, security architecture, citizens disposition, among others, be put in place by policy makers with the supports of all and sundry; measures such as sustainable economic empowerment, social protection programmes, improved security architecture, food production capable of growing the economy need be put in place toward realization of sustainable economy and sustainable development goals altogether.

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