

## INTERROGATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NIGERIAN SECURITY FORCES' COUNTER-INSURGENCY STRATEGIES AGAINST BOKO HARAM IN NORTHEAST NIGERIA

Akinbile, I. O. ; Momodu, J. A. & Owonikoko, S. B.

Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Moddibo Adama University, Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria.  
Correspondent email: [ismailakinbile@yahoo.com](mailto:ismailakinbile@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

The emergence of Boko Haram insurgents in Northeast Nigeria has led to the wanton loss of lives, livelihoods, and property on a devastating scale. This has significantly altered the dynamics of security operations in the country. In response, the Nigerian government has, since 2011, adopted various counter-insurgency strategies to combat Boko Haram terrorism (BHT) in the region. Since 2015, Boko Haram's activities appear to have declined, largely due to the implementation of these strategies by Nigerian security forces. To investigate this development, research objectives and questions were formulated to guide the study. These objectives were addressed using descriptive statistics, while inferential statistics were employed to gain deeper insights. A sample of 100 participants was selected, comprising serving and retired military personnel from the Nigerian Army, Navy, and Air Force. Additional participants included personnel from the Department of State Services (DSS), the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria, staff of the Ministry of Defence and the Defence Intelligence Agency, as well as members of the National Assembly Committees on the Army and Defence. Others included academics, staff of the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), and representatives of security-based non-governmental organizations. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources, including literature, questionnaires, and Key Informant Interviews (KII). The questionnaire data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores to answer the research questions. Data from the KII were analyzed using thematic analysis, while Chi-square tests were conducted to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level. The results of the Chi-square analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between the degradation of Boko Haram activities in the area of operations and the type of counter-insurgency strategy employed. The study found that the effectiveness of degrading Boko Haram operations was significantly influenced by the specific strategies used. It is recommended that the Federal Government and the military adopt an integrated approach that combines kinetic (military force) and non-kinetic (non-combat) strategies in counter-insurgency operations. The study concludes that the combined use of kinetic and non-kinetic strategies should be sustained by Nigerian security forces to ensure long-term success in the fight against insurgency.

**Keywords:** Counter Insurgency Strategy, Nigerian Security Forces, Boko Haram, North-East

### Introduction

Terrorism has become a household word as there is no nation that is completely immune to its effects. This is because the trend of globalization which includes science and technology has significantly influenced the incidence of terrorism, as an event in one country has direct or indirect effects on other countries (John, 2002). Africa as a continent has had it tough when it comes to terrorist activities due to the number of terrorist groups operating within the continent. These groups include Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Islamic State in West Africa (ISWAP), Boko Haram among others. Of all these groups, Boko Haram has consistently maintained its place as one of the most dangerous terrorist groups with the likes of Al-Qaeda and Islamic State. At a time, Boko Haram was rated as the third most deadly terrorist group in the world due to the number of causalities attributed to its attacks (Momodu, 2020). Although, there has been a decrease in the intensity of BHT activities in Nigeria compared to the previous years, but despite the decrease in deaths or terrorist attacks, Nigeria still records high rate of causalities. There were at least 4,422 battle-related deaths from the fight between BHT and the Nigerian government in 2015, down from 8,233 in 2014 (Global Terrorism Index, 2016). Even though the first recorded terrorist death by BHT was in 2009, the group has the second highest death toll out of all terrorist groups since 2000. Only the Taliban has killed more people than BHT.

The Sect has been active in Nigeria since 2002 (Tonwe & Eke 2013; Momodu, 2019). The dynamics of the group's operations and its apparent invincibility have raised fundamental questions not only about national security, but also of governance issues as well as Nigeria's corporate existence. Momodu posits that the attacks by the Sect have been mainly at government institutions and officials including churches, motor parks and sometimes mosques; countless number of innocent Nigerians has borne the brunt of these attacks, (2020).

In March 2015, Shekau swore allegiance to the leader of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or Daesh, Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi (ADF, 2015) cited in (Onuoha, 2016). In 2016, BHT split into two factions: Jama'atu Ahlis

Sunna Lidda'adatiwal-Jihad (JAS), led by Abubakar Shekau, and the Islamic State-West Africa (ISWAP), led by Abu Musab al Barnawi. On 19 May 2021, JAS's leader Abubakar Shekau with his troops was ambushed and killed by ISWAP in the Sambisa Forest. Shortly after the death of JAS's leader, ISWAP (now known as ISIS-WA) became active in the Chad Basin and fights an extensive terrorism against the State of Nigeria. In spite the dead of Abubakar Shekau, the Sect has continued to demonstrate the capability to coordinate attacks in selected villages, towns and cities in Nigeria, though their activities are prominent in the Northern Region especially in the Northeast geopolitical zone, with much of its concentration on Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States. It is on record that Boko Haram Insurgents (BHI) is responsible for over six hundred attacks that have claimed lives and properties of the citizens and government of Nigeria. The numerous attacks by BHT show the capacity of the Sect to carry out coordinated attacks with devastating impacts. According to Onuoha, et al (2020), after eleven years of escalation (2009-2020), BHI remains the greatest security threat within the Northern Nigerian, Sambisa Forest and the Mandara Mountain of the Nigeria-Cameroon Border. The Council of Foreign Relation (2021) reported that since 2011, more than 37,500 persons have been killed as a result of BHI. In response to these attacks, the Federal government came up with a lot of security measures. Since the intensification of the BHT in the Northeast of Nigeria, especially from 2011 to date, the Nigerian government and affected countries in the Lake Chad region have evolved kinetic and non-kinetic strategies in the bid to counter the insurgents.

The Federal government launched series of intervention policies to counter BHT. Prior to the emergence of BHT in 2009, Nigerian laws regarding terrorism were based on Section 11 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution. In 2011, the National Assembly promulgated the Terrorism Prevention Act, which defines acts of terrorism and provides framework for the investigation, prosecution, and interdiction of suspects in terrorism cases. This law was amended in 2013, and the amended version expanded the role of the Office of the National Security Adviser as the main coordinator for all counterterrorism enforcement activity (Omenma, et al., 2020). Since 2009, the Nigerian Armed Forces, Nigeria Police Force (NPF), the Department of State Security (DSS), Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) have been countering BHT. Out of these security agencies, the Nigerian Armed Forces have been in the forefront of the fight against BHT with the help of Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), hunters and vigilante association. These groups with their robust understanding of the local terrain had provided intelligence and skills in support of the security forces and uprooted BHT from areas within the North East (NE) they declared as their caliphate.

Omar and Ndubishi (2018) reported that ground forces have been a predominant feature of the military counterterrorism, especially in South-Central Borno, where Operation DEEP PUNCH I and II have seen a number of incursions into the Sambisa Forest area. Besides, the use of air power through series of Operations called RUWAN WUTA (Rain of Fire) has also been an essential part of Counterterrorism Operations (Omenma, et al 2020). Recently, the late Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Lieutenant General Ibrahim Attahiru renamed the previous Counter Insurgency Operation in the NE from Operation LAFIYA DOLE to Operation HADIN KAI. Furthermore, the effort of the Nigerian Security Agencies, civilian security groups and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) had strengthened diplomatic cooperation with Nigeria's neighbours for more effective regional counterterrorism approach, thus yielded significant results as almost 80 per cent of the territories under the capture of BHT were reclaimed (Assanyo, et al., 2016).

From inception of the violent campaign by the insurgents, the Nigerian government and its military have adopted various counter-insurgency strategies to combat BHT in the NE of Nigeria. Eneche (2015) reported that prior to July 2015, there appears to be no identifiable or obvious strategy used by the Nigerian Army (NA) to prosecute terrorism and insurgency in the NE. The NA actions then against terrorism and insurgency were the implementation of the NA Responsive Offensive Doctrine (ROD) which itself is not a strategy. He further reported that ROD was formulated for conventional operation not unconventional operation. However, the Nigerian government has adopted five Code Operations namely: Operation RESTORE ORDER 1, 11 and 111, Operation BOYONA, Operation ZAMAN LAFIYA, Operation LAFIYA DOLE and Operation HADIN KAI. Each Code Operations has its unique approach to combating BHT.

These Code Operations spanned a number of months or years with gains recorded. Most of the studies on counter-insurgency strategies focused more on the challenges, inadequate personnel, equipment, intelligence and funds while some have examined state and non-state collaboration efforts to tackle the operation (Momodu 2020; Owonikoko & Onuoha, 2019). Therefore, there appears to be limited literature that investigates the strengths of the counter-insurgency strategies and the reason why they were changed along the Code Operations. This study aims to unravel the strengths in various counter-insurgency strategies adopted in the Code Operations by the Nigerian security forces to combat BHI. This is with a view to understanding their gains and to reveal strategies that could sustain the efforts and make them more effective.

## Literature Review

### The Population-Centric Theory

The population-centric theory focuses on protecting the civilian population from terrorist, win their confidence and maintaining or winning its support in the effort to rid insurgency. This theory de-emphasized over-reliance on military approach to combating insurgency by the state. In other words, the argument of this theory is that while direct military confrontation might be needed in defeating the insurgents, it is not seen here as the primary objective which is to win the supports of the population.

### Conceptualizing Insurgency and Counter Insurgency

Insurgency is an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict (Robert, 2005). The term insurgency is often used to cover a wider scope of low-intensity conflicts and is often linked inextricably to terrorism as terrorism is a tool that many insurgent groups use to further their agendas. Often insurgencies start off as a resistance movement which is an organized effort by some portion of the civil population of a country to resist the legally established government or the occupying power and to disrupt the civil order and stability (Robert, 2005). Essentially, it's all about power: one group seeks to wrest power (and the corresponding ability to control economic resources) using both political resources and violence from the group that has the power. Their reasons for doing so are varied, but in its most distillate form, insurgencies are primarily a struggle for power and resources.

Christopher, (2011) also defines insurgency as the paramilitary, guerrilla, or nonviolent uprising directed against a nation-state or apparatus from within in order to achieve political objectives. Udama (2013) described insurgency as a protracted political-military struggle directed toward subverting or displacing the legitimacy of a constituted government or occupying power and completely or partially controlling the resources of a territory through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations.

According to Powell and Abraham (2006), insurgency refers to a violent move by a person or group of persons to resist or oppose the enforcement of law or the running of government or revolt against the constituted authority of the state or take part in insurrection. Insurgency is an armed rebellion group against a constituted authority when those taking part in the rebellion are not recognized. The term Insurgency has been the most prevalent type of armed conflict since the creation of organized political communities" (O'Neill, 2005). He thus defines insurgency as a general overarching concept that refers to a conflict between a government and an out-group or opponent in which the latter uses both political resources and violence to change, reformulate, or uphold legitimacy.

Terrorism Research (2009) posited that insurgency is a protracted political-military struggle directed toward subverting or displacing the legitimacy of a constituted government or occupying power and completely or partially controlling the resources of a territory through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations. The common denominator for most insurgent groups is their objective of gaining control of a population or a particular territory, including its resources. This objective differentiates insurgent groups from purely terrorist organizations. It is worth noting that identifying a movement as an insurgency does not convey a normative judgment on the legitimacy of the movement or its cause; the term insurgency is simply a description of the nature of the conflict.

### Counter Insurgency

Counter insurgency is a complex and multifaceted subject that encompasses a host of different strategies for dealing with violent extremism. Its central purpose can be described as devising methods and policies to cause non state groups that employ terror tactics to stop using violence to achieve their political objectives (Robert & Louise, 2007). Counter insurgency incorporates military tactics, techniques and strategy that government, military, law enforcement and intelligence agencies use to combat or prevent terrorism. Counter- insurgency strategies include attempts to counter financing of terrorism. If terrorism is part of a broader insurgency, counter-terrorism may employ counter-insurgency measures.

According to US Government Counterinsurgency Guide (2007), they described counter terrorism as the blend of comprehensive civilian and military efforts designed to simultaneously contain insurgency and address its foundation. There are different strategies available for countering insurgencies. Some of these include partnering with local population to spot terrorist infiltrators, considering political solution through negotiation or dialogue with terrorists, and relying on security forces to combat insurgency, among others (Onuoha, et al, 2020).

In the words of Alam (2019), counter insurgency encompasses a wide spectrum of actions put together in order to put an end to an insurgency. The military or kinetic movements of insurgent organizations are often the most

urgent and important security threat that states seek to address as a result of the devastating consequences. Hence, state response to insurgency is associated with an implicit judgement that the state itself perceives a significant threat from the insurgent group, independent of the reality of the threat such a group could pose.

There are several studies that highlight the best practices for waging counterinsurgency warfare. David Galula, is considered the intellectual God Father of counterinsurgency studies. Galula (1964) argued that, in order to counter an insurgency, it was essential for the counterinsurgent to win the support and legitimacy of the local population, promote good governance, and keep a sufficient number of troops in an area to provide security after the government's forces have taken it over. He also argues that is important to destroy or expel the main body of armed insurgents or, if that is not possible, to win over or suppress the last insurgent remnants. These principles provided the intellectual framework for countries like America and Britain to further develop and implement their respective counterinsurgency doctrines at both the theoretical and practical levels. They are also the foundation of General Petraeus's clear, hold, and build strategy.

Nagl (2005), building on Galula's work, argues that there are two approaches to counterinsurgency: the direct and indirect approach. The direct approach focuses primarily on defeating the enemy with military force. The indirect approach, on the other hand, involving a battle for the hearts and minds, focuses on a more population-centric strategy. It involves denying the insurgency the support of the local population while at the same time attacking the insurgency with military force. The primary goal of both the insurgent and the counterinsurgent is promoting good governance and winning legitimacy in the eyes of the local population.

### Methodology

Mixed method research design was employed in the study. The sample size for the study was determined by Yamane's (1967) formula. The instruments used for data collection include questionnaire and Key Informant Interview (KII). The data collected through questionnaire were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics while thematic/content analysis was used to analyze data collected through KII. Descriptive Statistics was used to achieve the objective which is to examine the strength of the counter insurgency strategies adopted in the code operations by the Nigerian security forces. In addition, Inferential Statistics was further used to gain more insight into the survey data collected as it was employed to achieve the same objective.

### Results and Discussions

**Table 1: Strengths of the Strategies Employed in Operation RESTORE ORDER**

Serial	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Decision
							Score	
1.	Clearance operations.	0	1	1	13	5	4.1	Accepted
2.	Improved logistic supply.	1	2	1	13	3	3.75	Accepted
3.	Improved command and control.	0	2	2	12	4	3.9	Accepted

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work and Analysis, 2023.

The strength of the kinetic approach adopted in the Code Operation indicated a positive perception among the surveyed population as shown in Table 1. A significant majority of the respondents, constituting 38 respondents agreed that clearance operations to maintain law and order in re-captured territories, improved logistic, command and control were strategic strengths of the operation. Additionally, 12 respondents strongly agreed with the approach, indicating a notable portion of the surveyed population with positive view on the strength of the Operation. On the other hand, 5 participants disagreed. About 4 provided a neutral response while one respondent strongly disagreed. The decision confirmed that all the views presented in the table were accepted as the operational strength.

### OPERATION BOYONA

Remarkable strengths in the kinetic approach adopted in Operation BOYONA were evident in the responses received from the survey. Table 2 reflect the strengths of the strategies adapted in Operation BOYONA.

**Table 2: Strengths of the Strategies Adopted in Operation BOYONA**

Serial	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean Score	Decision
1.	Fighting patrol by AHQ SF Team A to deny BHT freedom of movement.	1	1	5	11	2	3.6	Accepted
2.	Coordinated attack by AHQ SF Team.	0	2	1	11	6	4.05	Accepted
3.	Establishment of 7 Division Nigerian Army.	3	1	3	7	6	3.6	Accepted

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work and Analysis, 2023.

Assessing the strengths of Operation BOYONA, responses from the field revealed that fighting patrol conducted within Bama, Gwoza, and Ngoshe in by AHQ SF Team A to deny BHT freedom of action, coordinated attack by AHQ SF Team and the establishment of 7 Division Nigerian Army was a major breakthrough to the Code Operation, BOYONA. The results show that 29 of the respondents agreed that the kinetic approach in the Operation was seen as a strategic strength. Only 4 disagreed, 9 remained neutral, 14 strongly agreed, and 4 strongly disagreed. This implies an overall favourable view of the impact of the specific operation in those areas. The decision confirmed that the views presented in the table were accepted as the operational strength.

### **OPERATION ZAMAN LAFIYA**

This Code Operation recorded huge strengths from its offensive strategy based on recent lessons learnt from the previous operations and was believed to exhibit enormous achievements as shown in the table below.

**Table 3: Strengths of the Strategies Adopted in Operation ZAMAN LAFIYA**

Serial	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean Score	Decision
1.	The counter offensive by tanks operations to retake Mubi in Adamawa State from BHT.	0	0	1	12	7	4.3	Accepted
2.	Coordinated attack by land and forces with DSS.	0	2	1	11	6	4.05	Accepted
3.	Air offensive operation by the NAF at Bama, Damboa and Dikwa axis that neutralize BHT fighters.	1	0	3	14	2	3.8	Accepted

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work and Analysis, 2023.

In evaluating the strength of the kinetic strategy adopted in Operation ZAMAN LAFIYA, responses from the field on the counter-offensive by tanks/artillery to retake Mubi in Adamawa State from BHI, coordinated attack on land and air with DSS including Air offensive operation by the NAF at Bama, Damboa and Dikwa axis that neutralized BHT fighters indicated a positive perception among the surveyed population as shown in Table 3. A significant majority of the respondents, comprising 37, supported the view. This suggests that the participants believed that the success recorded was the strength of the kinetic actions. Also, 15 respondents strongly agreed, interestingly, 5 of the participants provided a neutral response. Meanwhile, one respondent strongly disagreed, only 2 respondents disagreed. The decision confirmed that counter-offensive by tanks, coordinated attack by land and Air forces with DSS and Air offensive operation by the NAF were accepted as the operational strength.

### **OPERATION LAFIYA DOLE (Kinetic Approach)**

Operation LAFIYA DOLE exhibited a show of strength in its various outings where it showcased a show of dominance from its formidable strategies which witnessed a mix of kinetic and non-kinetic approach as displayed in the table below.

**Table 4: Kinetic Strategies Adopted in Operation LAFIYA DOLE**

Serial	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean Score	Decision
1.	Operation DEEP PUNCH to clear BHT from Sambisa Forest.	0	1	10	6	3	3.55	Accepted
2.	Coordinated attack by Land and Air, DSS and CJTF.	0	2	11	1	6	4.05	Accepted
3.	Operation CRACKDOWN to decimate BHT, equipment and intelligence network	0	0	6	11	3	3.85	Accepted

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work and Analysis, 2023.

In evaluating the strength of Operation LAFIYA DOLE with a mainly kinetic strategy, the responses regarding Operation DEEP PUNCH, Operation CRACKDOWN and coordinated attack on land and air with CJTF aimed to decimate Boko Haram's equipment capacity, and intelligence network all indicated positive perceptions among the surveyed population. Majority of the respondents, comprising 18, agreed with the view as reflected in Table 4. Only 12 respondents strongly agreed. On the contrary, 17 participants provided a neutral response, while 2 respondents disagreed, no respondents strongly disagreed. Having highlighted the strengths of the kinetic approach of the Code Operation, let's focus on the strengths of the Non-Kinetic Strategies of the Code Operation. The decision confirmed that the views presented in the table were accepted as the operational strength.

#### **OPERATION LAFIYA DOLE (Non- Kinetic Approach)**

**Table 5: Non- Kinetic Approach of Operation LAFIYA DOLE**

Serial	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean Score	Decision
1.	Introduction of DRR Scheme to BHT Fighters	0	5	7	6	2	3.25	Accepted
2.	Introduction of Cyber Warfare Command.	0	2	1	11	6	4.05	Accepted
3.	Introduction of Ya Akan, Gyara Kayanka programs by Radio Lafiya Dole 107.7	0	0	4	11	5	3.85	Accepted

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work and Analysis, 2023.

In assessing the strength of Operation LAFIYA DOLE with a non-kinetic strategy, responses with respect to introduction to de-radicalization/rehabilitation/reintegration of Boko Haram fighters back to society, indicated a diverse range of perspectives among the surveyed population. Also, the media operation which was established in 2014 with the aim to persuading Boko Haram fighters to lay down arms while discouraging others from taking up arms against the State received significant response. The Media run programs such as Ya Akan, Wayi Gari, Gyara Kayanka among others. From the survey shown in Table 5, 28 respondents agreed that Operation Safe Corridor was a strategic strength. This suggests recognition of strength from some participants that the non-kinetic aspects of this operation were perceived as beneficial. On the contrary, 7 participants disagreed with the view while 14 strongly agreed, and 12 provided a neutral response. The decision confirmed that the views presented in the table were accepted as the operational strength.

#### **OPERATION HADIN KAI (Kinetic Strategy)**

The most recent and ongoing operation in the northeast is Operation HADIN KAI. It was endowed with some elements of kinetic approach that strengthened the success of the operation as shown by the responses in the table below.

**Table 6: Kinetic Strategy Adopted in Operation HADIN KAI**

Serial	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean Score	Decision
1.	Sustainability of Army Super Camp	0	3	3	13	1	3.75	Accepted
2.	Sustainment of Cyber Warfare	0	2	1	12	5	4	Accepted Command
3.	IED Screening.	0	1	1	15	3	4	Accepted

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work and Analysis, 2023.

In assessing the strength of the kinetic strategy adopted in Operation HADIN KAI, responses regarding the sustainability of the Army Super Camp, sustainment of cyber warfare command and IED screening/clearing operations indicated a positive perception among the surveyed population. A significant majority of the respondents, comprising 40, agreed with the view. This suggests a consensus among the participants that the kinetic actions adopted have been the strength in achieving their intended objectives. Additionally, 9 of the respondents strongly agreed with the view. On the contrary, 6 participants disagreed with the statement while 5 provided a neutral response. The decision confirmed that the views presented in the Table 6 were accepted as the operational strength.

#### **OPERATION HADIN KAI (non-kinetic)**

Some of the strengths of the non-kinetic strategies adopted in Operation HADIN KAI are shown in the tables below.

**Table 7: Non-kinetic Strategy Adopted in Operation HADIN KAI**

Serial	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean Score	Decision
1.	Sustainment of vocational training and skill acquisition to repented BHT	0	1	4	13	2	3.8	Accepted
2.	Media public enlightenment	0	2	1	10	7	4.1	Accepted
3.	Free medical assistance to the local people.	0	1	1	15	3	4	Accepted

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work and Analysis, 2023.

As shown above, the strength of Operation HADIN KAI with vocational training, skill acquisition and free medical and educational assistance to the local people as a non-kinetic strategy indicated a positive perception among the surveyed population. Significant majority of the respondents, comprising 38, agreed that the non-kinetic strategies were helpful. This suggests a consensus among the participants that this specific non-kinetic approach is an operational strength in achieving its intended goals. Just 12 respondents strongly agreed while 4 disagreed. Only 6 provided a neutral response. The decision confirmed that the views presented in Table 7 were accepted as the operational strength.

#### **Strategy and Success of the Operation in Cross Tabulation**

**Table 8: Cross Tabulation for Strategy against Degrading of Boko Haram Insurgency**

Strategy	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Total
Degrading of BHT						
Kinetic	76	13	12	2	7	110
(Kinetic & Non-Kinetic)	27	4	2	0	11	44
Total	103	17	14	2	18	154

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work and Analysis, 2023.

Table 8 presents a cross-tabulation of responses related to the perceived extent to which Boko Haram's activities in the Northeast have been degraded based on different strategies employed. The data is organized into categories of agreement, disagreement, neutral stance, strongly disagree, and strongly agree.

For the "Kinetic" strategy, a total of 110 respondents participated in the survey. Among them, 72 agreed that the strategy has degraded the activities of BHI, 3 disagreed, 22 were neutral, 2 strongly disagreed, and 11 strongly agreed. In the "Kinetic & Non-Kinetic" strategy category, there were 44 respondents. Of these, 27 agreed, 4 disagreed, 11 were neutral, and 2 strongly agreed. No respondents strongly disagreed in this category.

The combined total across both strategies includes 154 responses, with 99 agreeing, 7 disagreeing, 33 being neutral, 2 strongly disagreeing, and 13 strongly agreeing. This cross-tabulation provides an overview of the distribution of opinions on the success of operations in degrading the activities of the BHT in the study area with respect to the two major strategies employed, which are kinetic and a combination of both kinetic and non kinetic, highlighting the varying degrees of agreement or disagreement among the respondents.

### Hypothesis 1

There is no statistical significance relationship between the strategies employed and the degrading of BHT activities. The results are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9: Chi-Square Test for Degrading of BHT Activities and Strategies Employed**

Chi-Square Tests	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance(2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	12.31a	4	0.017
Likelihood Ratio	11.669a	4	0.020
N of Valid Cases 40			
<i>a. 4 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .57.</i>			

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work and Analysis, 2023.

**Pearson Chi-Square:** The calculated Chi-square value is 12.031 with 4 degrees of freedom, resulting in an asymptotic significance (p-value) of .017

**Likelihood Ratio:** The likelihood ratio Chi-square value is 11.669 with 4 degrees of freedom, and the asymptotic significance is 0.020.

These values indicate that there was a statistically significant association between the strategies employed and the degrading of BHT activities, as both p-values are less than the conventional significance level of 0.05. Therefore, based on the Chi-square test, the degrading of Boko Haram activities in the area of operations is significantly influenced by the type of strategy employed. This is in tandem with the Population-Centric Theory which de-emphasized over reliance on military kinetic approach to also focus on winning the support of the population to rid insurgency.

Connecting this with the words of Brig Gen. B. C. Olabode rtd (Interview on 16 November 2023, Abuja). He asserted that there was a significant improvement in the performance of operations ever since "our initially purely kinetic approach was modified to include both kinetic and non-kinetic methods, which gave us more access to alternative source of information for actionable intelligence". This therefore affirms that strategies employed is indeed a significant determinant in degrading BHT activities

### Hypothesis 2

There is no statistical significance association between Pure Kinetic and Combined strategy in degrading of BHT activities. The results are presented in the table below.

**Table 10: Measures of Association between Pure Kinetic and Combined strategy**

Symmetric Measures	Value	Approximately Significance
Phi	0.280	0.017
Cramer's V	0.280	0.017
N of Valid Cases	154	

**Phi:** The calculated Phi coefficient is 0.280, and the approximate significance is 0.017.

**Cramer's V:** The Cramer's V coefficient is also 0.280, with an approximate significance of 0.017.

These measures of association further support the findings from the Chi-square test, indicating a strong association between the type of strategy employed (pure kinetic or combined) and the perceived success of operations. The p-values below the significance level of 0.05 suggests that the relationship was statistically significant.

Therefore, based on these measures, there is a strong evidence to conclude that the success of operations in degrading the activities of Boko Haram is significantly associated with the choice of combining pure kinetic and non-kinetic strategies.

Interview with Dr Zannah Boguma, the Zan-Borgman of Borno (on 16 December, 2023, Borno State), provided positive assessments of the combined counter-insurgency strategies adopted. He acknowledges the achievements of the counter-insurgency strategies, citing a significant reduction in threat, violence and the return of people to their communities, highlighting the tangible progress made from the combination of both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches. This therefore affirms that there would be a significant difference in the performance between operation that uses purely kinetic and those that uses the combination of kinetic and non-kinetic approaches in degrading the activities of BHT in the sub-region.

In all, the result of the strength of the strategies adopted in the Code Operations as shown in Table 10 indicate that combine kinetic and non-kinetic approach will have more success when compared with solely kinetic strategy. This explains reason Code Operation that solely adopts the kinetic approach could not contain the spread/spill-over of Boko Haram menace and why armaments were never enough.

## Conclusion

The study investigated the effectiveness of the strategies adopted by Nigerian security forces against Boko Haram insurgents in Northeast Nigeria. The analysis revealed several strengths associated with the degradation of Boko Haram's capabilities in the region. These strengths include the de-radicalization of Boko Haram fighters, the introduction of a cyber warfare command, and coordinated joint operations involving land and sea attacks against the group.

In examining the de-radicalization of Boko Haram fighters, the study found that operations which combined kinetic and non-kinetic approaches—referred to as code-named operations—had a greater impact in dismantling Boko Haram's structure and organization. This was evidenced by the higher number of surrendered fighters compared to operations that relied solely on kinetic (military) approaches.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following key recommendations are proposed:

- i. The National Security Adviser and military should ensure the non-kinetic approach to counter insurgency is adopted in all Code Operations across the State for enhanced national security by the Armed Forces of Nigeria.
- ii. The Chief of Defence Staff should commence the review of NA non-kinetics approach to reflect Electronic and Cyber approach of modern warfare as being practice in developed nations.
- iii. The Defence Headquarters should improve its civil-military relations in order to sustain the success of recaptured territories. Also, there should be closed monitoring of de-radicalized insurgents, reintegrated into communities through the Safe Corridor programme.

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