

# Entrepreneurship: An Antidote for Addressing Security Challenges for Economic Development in Niger State, Nigeria

**Abdullahi Hassan**

*Department of Business Education,  
Niger State College of Education,  
Minna*

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*Corresponding Author:*

Abdullahi Hassan

**Abstract**

This study examined entrepreneurship as an antidote for addressing security challenges for economic development in Niger State. The study utilized a survey research design. The population of the study was one thousand five hundred and sixty-eight (1,568) registered SMEs in Minna Metropolis of Niger State. The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table was used in determining the sample size of the study, which was 306 SMEs in Minna Metropolis. The instrument used in data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Entrepreneurship as an Antidote to Security Challenges for Economic Development Questionnaire (EASCEDQ). The instrument was tested for validity by three experts from the Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education at Kwara State University, Malete. Chronbach Alpha statistics were used to measure the degree of consistency, and the reliability coefficient was 0.89, which showed that the instrument was reliable. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used in the analysis of data collected in the field using SPSS, while regression was used in testing the null hypotheses at an alpha level of 0.05 level of significance. The findings suggest that entrepreneurship plays a substantial role in effectively addressing security challenges in Niger State, Nigeria. The study also highlights that entrepreneurship programs and the establishment of a model demonstrating efficient utilization of entrepreneurial opportunities account for 65% of the observed reduction in insecurity in the study area. The study recommended that the government intensify efforts to create a conducive business environment that will promote entrepreneurship development by providing grants and tax holidays for prospective entrepreneurs. This will lead to economic development.

## **Background to the Study**

In the past two decades, governments and scholars, both in advanced and emerging countries, have shown considerable interest in entrepreneurship as a key economic factor. Entrepreneurship is often described as the ability of an individual or a collective to recognize and exploit opportunities for the betterment of society, resulting in success for both the innovators and their respective organization. It encompasses the capability and readiness to initiate, structure, and oversee a business endeavor, encompassing the handling of associated risks, all with the objective of generating profits (Young African Leaders Initiative, 2022). The connection between entrepreneurship and a nation's economic progress has gained significant attention among economists and policymakers. The recognition of entrepreneurship's impact on promoting economic development and tackling security challenges is growing among both economists and policymakers (Taxman, 2023).

In Nigeria, insecurity poses a significant obstacle to the country's developmental progress (Okonkwo, Ndubuisi, and Anagbogu, 2015). Security challenges encompass various disturbances to peace and security challenges in Nigeria, whether rooted in historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic, or political factors, have been substantial contributors to recurring conflicts that have resulted in extensive damage, loss of life, and property over the years. The term denotes a lack of or insufficient freedom from danger (Abdullahi, 2022), with a primary focus on physical insecurity, which serves as a visible manifestation feeding into other forms of insecurity, such as economic and social insecurity (Abdullahi, 2022). Insecurity signifies the absence of safety, the presence of danger, hazards, uncertainty, absence of protection. Beland (2005) defines security challenges as a state of fear or anxiety arising from an actual or perceived lack of protection. The disruptions caused by insecurity challenges extend to both social and economic activities, resulting in hindered economic development.

Economic development, on the other hand, entails the continual growth in real per capita income, along with diverse metrics related to income and wealth distribution, and enhancements in quality-of-life indicators. These indicators encompass aspects ranging from life expectancy to crime rates and environmental quality (Feldman, Theodora, Thomas, & Lauren, 2017). The microeconomics of growth is a central focus of economic development. It is considered crucial for a country's efforts to alleviate poverty by offering increased employment, higher incomes, enhanced goods and services, and the adoption of advanced production technologies (Prabha, 2021). Entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in generating additional employment opportunities, contributing to the overall objectives of economic development, reduced poverty but also establishes a lawful and steady source of income for individuals, potentially diminishing the incentive to resort to criminal activities driven by economic desperation. The social impact of entrepreneurship extends to fostering strong community bonds that instill a sense of belonging, discouraging criminal behavior as individuals are more inclined to invest in the well-being of a community to which they feel connected (Maryville University, 2021). The promotion of self-employment through entrepreneurship further contributes to

crime reduction. By keeping individuals actively engaged in entrepreneurial pursuits, the potential for idleness, often considered a breeding ground for criminal activities, is diminished. Embracing and supporting entrepreneurial skills with the necessary resources becomes imperative to harness the positive impact on both economic development and societal well-being.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Unemployment has been considered as a significant factor contributing to the security challenges in Niger State and across Nigeria. The rise in social vices such as kidnapping, armed robbery, child trafficking, cultism, drug peddling, and ritual killing can be attributed to the lack of employment opportunities (Ogbuanya & Michael, 2015). According to SBM Intelligence (2022), kidnappings in the country witnessed a notable surge from June 2011 to the end of March 2020, with a reported payment of at least \$18 million in ransom to kidnappers during this period. The lack of employment opportunities often leads to social unrest, which often escalates into violence and threatens peace and stability in Niger State. On the other hand, entrepreneurship has been identified as a powerful tool for promoting security and economic development internationally. Entrepreneurship serves as a pathway for individuals to participate in productive endeavors, allowing them to generate wealth, achieve self-reliance, and play a role in the development of their communities and the overall progress of the country. Entrepreneurship, therefore, plays a significant role in promoting peace and security by addressing various social and economic factors that contribute to conflicts and instability.

In light of this, there is a need to examine and create awareness about the extent to which entrepreneurship can be utilized in addressing security challenges and promoting economic development in Niger State. This study, therefore, intends to explore the potential of entrepreneurship in addressing security challenges and economic development in Niger State.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This research will:

1. Determine the impact of entrepreneurship in addressing security challenges in Niger State.
2. Examine the impact of entrepreneurship in economic development of Niger State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the impact of entrepreneurship in addressing security challenges in Niger State?
2. What is the impact of entrepreneurship in economic development of Niger State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide this study:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant impact of entrepreneurship in addressing security challenges in Niger State

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant impact of entrepreneurship in economic development of Niger State.

### **Concept of Entrepreneurships**

Entrepreneurship is a complex and multifaceted concept, lacking a consistent definition or universally agreed-upon conceptual framework. Entrepreneurship is a comprehensive term frequently linked with industrial advancement and individual ingenuity. Essentially, it involves specialized knowledge and skills that propel entrepreneurs to conceive innovative and creative ideas, translating them into bold and decisive business actions that result in sustainable profitability (Oladimeji, Eze, & Worimegbe, 2020). This creativity and innovation are integral to the production process and the creation of value. In the broader context, entrepreneurship serves as the foundation for the development of nations, acting as the lifeblood that generates value and forms the building blocks of growth necessary for overall development. It represents the concrete manifestation of individuals' evident capability and readiness, whether working independently or collaboratively within or outside established organizations, to recognize and generate novel economic opportunities. These opportunities may involve innovative products, production methods, organizational structures, and novel combinations of products and markets. Entrepreneurs are distinguished by their ability to bring ideas to the market, navigating uncertainties and surmounting challenges through decisions on aspects such as location, structure, and the efficient utilization of resources and institutions (Adeoye, 2015).

### **Concept of Security**

Contemporary literature widely agrees that security plays a crucial role in fostering national cohesion, peace, and sustainable development. Security challenges within a nation pose significant threats to lives and properties, impede business activities, and deter both local and foreign investors, inevitably resulting in a slowdown of economic growth and development (Okonkwo et al., 2015). The term "security challenges" encompasses various aspects, such as inadequate security, a lack of safety, heightened hazards, increased uncertainty, and insufficient protection.

Achumba, Ighomereho, and Akpor-Robaro (2013) offer two perspectives on insecurity or security challenges. Firstly, entrepreneurs stand out due to their capability to introduce ideas to the market, adeptly navigating uncertainties, and overcoming challenges by making strategic decisions regarding elements like location, organizational structure, and the effective utilization of resources and institutions. Secondly, insecurity is viewed as the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, with anxiety being a vague, unpleasant emotion experienced in anticipation of potential misfortune. Security challenges manifest in different forms, including communal conflicts, insurgency, crime, and

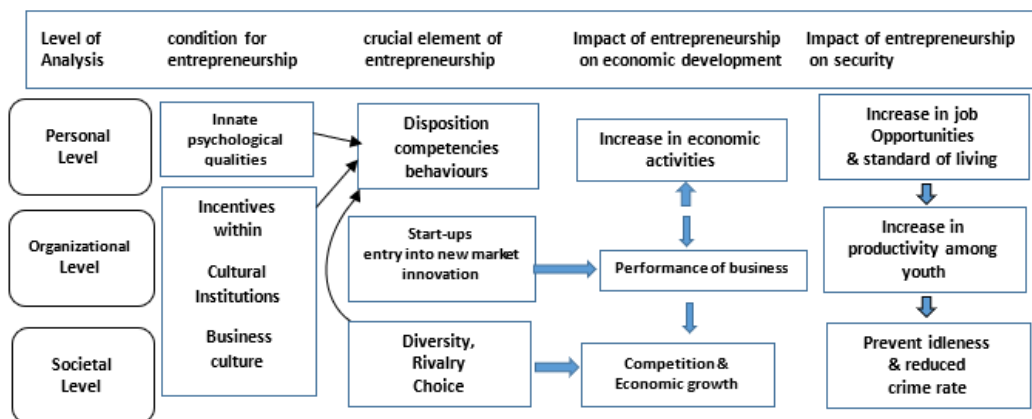
political instability. These challenges exert detrimental effects on the social fabric, economic development, and overall well-being of the population. Effectively addressing security challenges requires a comprehensive understanding of their specific nature and causes.

### Entrepreneurship, Economic Development and Security Challenges

The widely accepted belief in the positive correlation between entrepreneurship and economic growth has been ingrained in economic thought since the early contributions of Schumpeter. The notion that entrepreneurship is pivotal in promoting economic growth is substantiated by the notion that a rise in the number of entrepreneurs directly correlates with an expansion of overall economic growth. (Adeoye, 2015). This positive impact is a consequence of entrepreneurs manifesting their skills, particularly their inclination toward innovation.

Moreover, entrepreneurship serves as a valuable tool in equipping the youth with essential entrepreneurial skills and opportunities. This empowerment has the potential to address issues such as youth restiveness and other forms of crimes. By providing avenues for the expression of innovative ideas and creating opportunities for young individuals to engage in entrepreneurial activities, entrepreneurship becomes a means of positively channeling youthful energy and creativity. Consequently, it not only contributes to economic growth but also serves as a proactive strategy in mitigating social challenges associated with youth unrest and criminal activities. Fig. 1 below was designed to illustrate the impact of entrepreneurship on economic development and security.

**Fig 1:** Schematic Diagram of the Effect of Entrepreneurship on Economic Development and security



**Source:** Authors Design, 2023

Entrepreneurship acts as a channel through which skills, methodologies, and attitudes conducive to innovation and creativity are transmitted, consequently playing a role in

driving economic growth and development. Ogundele, Oluwalola, and Adegbeni (2011) highlight that entrepreneurship serves as a platform for imparting vocational and technical skills to individuals. These acquired skills, in turn, play a pivotal role in job creation, youth empowerment, poverty alleviation among the younger demographic, and the resolution of social and security issues in society. By providing a platform for individuals to develop and apply their skills in entrepreneurial endeavors, it steers them towards becoming industrious contributors to society, instead of being potential sources of social and political instability. In essence, entrepreneurship becomes a means of not only fostering economic growth but also cultivating a proactive approach to societal challenges by empowering individuals with the skills needed to address pressing issues.

### **Methodology**

The research employed a survey research design, focusing on a population of 1,568 registered Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Minna Metropolis, Niger State. The sample size of 306 SMEs in Minna Metropolis was ascertained using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. The instrument used in data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurship as an Antidote to Security Challenges for Economic Development Questionnaire" (EASCEDQ). To ensure the validity of the instrument, three experts from the Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education at Kwara State University, Malete, reviewed it. The instrument's reliability was assessed using Chronbach Alpha statistics, yielding a coefficient of reliability of 0.89, indicating high reliability.

### **Result and Discussion**

**Research Question 1:** What is the impact of entrepreneurship in addressing security challenges in Niger State?

**Table 1:** Responses on the impact of entrepreneurship in addressing security challenges in Niger State

S/No	Impact	Mean	St. Dev.	Remarks
1	Entrepreneurship initiatives in Niger State have contributed to improved security conditions.	3.12	0.62	Accepted
2	Start-up businesses in Niger State have reduced the incidence of insecurity.	2.66	0.54	Accepted
3	Entrepreneurship has helped create employment opportunities, which in turn has reduced security challenges in the state.	2.77	0.59	Accepted
4	The presence of entrepreneurial activities has led to a sense of community and unity that positively impacts security.	3.12	0.62	Accepted
5	Government policies and support for entrepreneurship have enhanced security in Niger State.	2.66	0.54	Accepted
6	Entrepreneurial ventures promote social stability and harmony in the state.	3.12	0.62	Accepted
7	Entrepreneurship has the potential to reduce the influence of illegal activities and criminal groups.	2.66	0.54	Accepted
8	The local community actively supports and encourages entrepreneurial efforts to improve security.	3.12	0.62	Accepted
9	Entrepreneurship initiatives have a significant impact in fostering a sense of responsibility among the youth, reducing security challenges.	2.67	0.57	Accepted
10	Entrepreneurship has the potential to transform Niger State into a safer and more secure state	2.77	0.59	Accepted
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>3.76</b>	<b>1.34</b>	

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 indicates that all the ten items recorded mean score above the cut-off mean score of 2.50. The table also recorded cluster mean of 3.76 and standard deviation of 1.34. The table further indicates all the respondent shared the same opinion on the impact of entrepreneurship in addressing security challenges in Niger State. The analysis above established a significant impact of entrepreneurship in minimizing crime rate among the people in Niger State.

**Research Question 2:** What is the impact of entrepreneurship in economic development of Niger State?

**Table 2:** Responses on the Impact of Entrepreneurship in Economic Development of Niger State

S/No	Impact	Mean	St. Dev.	Remarks
1	Entrepreneurship has played a key role in fostering economic growth and development in Niger State.	3.25	0.78	Accepted
2	Start-up businesses have contributed to job creation and reduced unemployment in the state.	3.21	0.69	Accepted
3	Entrepreneurial ventures have positively affected the income levels of individuals in Niger State.	2.77	0.59	Accepted
4	Government support for entrepreneurship has enhanced economic development in the state.	3.12	0.62	Accepted
5	Entrepreneurship has led to the diversification of the economy in Niger State.	3.25	0.78	Accepted
6	Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have played a significant role in driving economic progress in the state.	3.12	0.62	Accepted
7	Entrepreneurship has attracted investments and improved the overall business environment in Niger State.	2.66	0.54	Accepted
8	Entrepreneurship has led to increased exports and trade opportunities for Niger State.	3.12	0.62	Accepted
9	The presence of entrepreneurial activities has positively impacted the standard of living in the state.	3.25	0.78	Accepted
10	Entrepreneurship is a key driver of sustainable economic development in Niger State.	3.25	0.78	Accepted
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		3.98	1.54	

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 indicates that all the ten items recorded mean score above the cut-off mean score of 2.50. The table also recorded cluster mean of 3.98 and standard deviation of 1.54. The table further indicates that all the respondent shared the same opinion on the impact of entrepreneurship in economic development of Niger State. The analysis above indicates a significant impact of entrepreneurship in economic development of Niger State.

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant impact of entrepreneurship in addressing security challenges in Niger State.

**Table 3:** Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	STD. Error of the Estimate
1	.661	.605	.604	7.275

- a. Predictor: (Constant), Entrepreneurship
- b. Dependent Variables: Security Challenges

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023



Table 3 indicates that the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) is 0.605, signifying that 60.5% of the variance or decrease in security challenges can be accounted for by the entrepreneurial activities undertaken by various entrepreneurs in Niger State.

**Table 4:** Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Square	Df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	789.225	1	789.225	1167.788	-.000
	Residual	83.127	123	.676		
<b>Total</b>	<b>872.352</b>	<b>124</b>				

- a. Predictor: (Constant), Entrepreneurship  
 b. Dependent Variables: Security Challenges

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023

The analysis of ANOVA in Table 4 disclosed that the F-Statistics yielded a value of F (1167.788), which is statistically significant at a 0.05 confidence level. Consequently, the findings suggest that the independent variable (entrepreneurship activities) played a significant role in the substantial reduction of security challenges.

**Table 5:** Regression Analysis Showing Impact of Entrepreneurship on Security Challenges in Niger State

Model	Unstandardised Coefficient		Standardised Coefficient	T	Sig.
	$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta		
1 Constant	22.015	2.753		7.996	.000
Entrepreneurship		.030	.951	34.173	

- a. Dependent Variables: Security Challenges

**Source:** Field Survey. 2023

Table 5 highlights that the t-values of the regression coefficients are statistically significant at a 95% confidence level ( $t = 7.996$ ,  $P = 0.05$ ). This indicates that entrepreneurship, as a predictor variable, has a noteworthy impact on reducing security challenges. The standardized linear regression model is expressed as  $F=22.015+1.010\beta$ , and the standardized beta coefficient indicates that a unit change in entrepreneurship activities leads to a 60.5% decrease in crime rates, thereby mitigating security challenges in Niger State. Therefore, the null hypotheses which states that there is no significant impact of entrepreneurship in addressing security challenges in Niger State was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant impact of entrepreneurship in economic development of Niger State.

**Table 6:** Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.514 <sup>a</sup>	.715	.223	1.00567

a. Predictor: (Constant), Entrepreneurship  
b. Dependent Variables: Economic Development

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023

The table 6 above is a summary of the model which shows relationship that exists between the studied variables which is entrepreneurship and economic development of Niger State. The analysis shows a positive significant relationship as  $r = 0.715(72\%)$ . This shows that entrepreneurship has a positive significant relationship with economic development of Niger State.

**Table 7:** ANOVA<sup>a</sup> (Analysis of Variance)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.234	1	6.234	6.345	.038 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	18.457	2	18.457		
	Total	24.691	3			

a. Predictor: (Constant), Entrepreneurship  
b. Dependent Variables: Economic Development

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023

Table 7 shows that the significant value or p value is 0.038 which is less than the alpha value of 0.05. This signifies that the model is significant at  $F = 6.345$ ,  $p = 0.038$ . This shows that entrepreneurship is a good predictor of economic development of Niger State. Therefore, the null hypotheses which states that there is no significant impact of entrepreneurship on economic development of Niger State is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings from research question one indicates a positive impact of entrepreneurship in addressing security challenges in Niger State. Entrepreneurship initiatives have contributed to an enhanced security situation, with start-up businesses playing a role in reducing insecurity. The creation of employment opportunities through entrepreneurship has been particularly effective in mitigating security challenges. The presence of entrepreneurial activities fosters a sense of community, unity, and positive impacts on security. Government policies and support for entrepreneurship have also played a role in enhancing security. Entrepreneurial ventures are seen as promoting social stability and harmony, potentially reducing the influence of illegal activities and

criminal groups. The local community actively supports and encourages entrepreneurial efforts, contributing significantly to fostering a sense of responsibility among the youth and subsequently reducing security challenges.

Similarly, the results from research question two highlight the significant role of entrepreneurship in fostering economic growth and development in Niger State. Start-up businesses have contributed to job creation, leading to a reduction in unemployment. Entrepreneurial ventures have positively affected the income levels of individuals in the state, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have played a substantial role in driving economic progress. The results of hypothesis one indicates a substantial contribution of entrepreneurship to economic empowerment, leading to a 60.5% impact on addressing security challenges. This finding is consistent with earlier research indicating that the advancement of entrepreneurship, involving the exploration of business opportunities, positively affects both crime rates and the overall state of national security. Hypothesis two further reveals a significant and positive correlation, highlighting that entrepreneurship contributes to a 72% positive relationship with the economic development of Niger State. This outcome aligns with prior studies emphasizing the pivotal role of entrepreneurship in facilitating rapid economic growth, enhancing national security, and mitigating issues such as unemployment and poverty, which are often linked to crime and insecurity in the country.

### **Conclusion**

The contribution of entrepreneurship to addressing security challenges in Niger State cannot be overemphasized. In light of the empirical studies and findings, the current study, concluded that entrepreneurship has a significant impact on addressing security challenges in Niger State. The findings of this study indicate that entrepreneurship is indispensable in minimizing security challenges in Niger State, as it prevents idleness and promotes productivity among the people, thereby reducing the crime rate. The study further concluded that entrepreneurship has a significant impact on enhancing the economic development of Niger State. Entrepreneurial activities contribute to employment generation, revenue creation, and improvements in the standard of living of the people in Niger State.

### **Recommendations**

The identified findings resulted in the formulation of the following recommendations:

1. The Niger State Government, in collaboration with the Federal Government, should intensify its effort in formulating policies and programs that will promote entrepreneurship development in Niger State as a means of addressing security challenges in the state.
2. NGOs and corporate organizations should also complement government efforts by providing support in terms of funds, grants, and entrepreneurship training to empower youth to become self-reliant.
3. The Central Bank of Nigeria should mandate microfinance banks and other commercial banks to provide loans at low interest rates for SMEs to increase

entrepreneurial activities in the state.

4. The community should also complement government efforts by supporting entrepreneurial activities and providing an enabling environment for entrepreneurs to excel.

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