

INSECURITY AND SMALL AND MEDIUM-SCALE ENTERPRISES PERFORMANCE IN ZAMFARA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Kidnapping, cattle rustling and banditry in Zamfara state pose serious security threat not only to the state but to the entire North West and Nigeria at large. The level at which bandits operate within the landscape of Zamfara State, northwest of Nigeria has led to the spread of kidnapping, maiming of people, loss of lives, displacements people, etc and these have equally brought about an atmosphere of uncertainty, a situation that has become worrisome to the government and the society at large. The main objective of the study is to examine insecurity and small and medium enterprises performance in Zamfara state Nigeria. The study adopts a Survey Research Design through the use of primary data. The population of the study was 1,236, with a sample size of 302. Simple random sampling technique was employed. Multi regression technique was used to test the hypotheses. The study revealed that insecurity of kidnapping, banditry, and cattle rustling had negative effects on sales volume, efficiency and profitability of SMEs owners in Zamfara State. The study concluded that Kidnapping, banditry, and cattle rustling had significant negative effects on the sales volume, efficiency, and profitability of small and medium enterprises in Zamfara State. It was recommended that collaborations between law enforcement, SMEs, and local communities will help to raise knowledge and alertness regarding security. Fostering tighter cooperation between security authorities and SME associations may exchange information, plan responses, and work together to solve security issues.

Keywords: Insecurity, Banditry, kidnapping, cattle rustling, Performance, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

INTRODUCTION

Insecurity is a broad concept that can be understood in various contexts, but it generally refers to a state of uncertainty, vulnerability, or instability that affects individuals, groups, or systems. It can manifest in emotional, physical, social, economic, and political dimensions. Insecurity is also described as alludes to little or non-existent safety from harm. This suggests that the lack of peace, order, and security is synonymous with insecurity. That is, when something is in danger, it means that there is a possibility of harm or injury. Insecurity is the state of being exposed to danger or potential danger that hampered the holistic existed, growth and development of society. Feeling inadequate in one or more aspects of life, low self-esteem, and trouble with uncertainty,

failure, or adversity are all considered forms of insecurity. Nigeria has experienced an alarming increase in insecurity, endangering people's lives, property, enterprises, and all other forms of economic activity (Aliyu, et al., 2024; Iyoha, & Nkemdilim, 2024). Both political, socially and personally, insecurity can have detrimental effects like stress, anxiety, making bad decisions, and instability in business, corporate, community and societal existence (Sarafa, & Monday, 2024; Odusote, & Bello, 2024). Addressing insecurity often requires systemic changes, better governance, social support, economic stability, and efforts to promote confidence and safety. The Northwest region of Nigeria, especially the states of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto, and Niger, is home to a high rate of banditry, kidnapping, cattle rustling, and terrorism, all of

which pose serious security risks to the country and the world at large. (Nwagwu, & Enwelum, 2024; Mershakka, et al., 2024; Ojewale, 2024). A major problem that has impeded industrialization and sustainable development in Nigeria in particular as well as throughout Africa is insecurity (Hassan, & Umar, 2024; Bello, 2024). That is, the activities of these insecurity have seriously and tremendously affected the social and economic lives of the people in regions in Nigeria and other part of the world.

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are defined as businesses whose workforce, revenue, or assets remain within specific thresholds, which differ depending on the country and industry. Generally recognized by their size, adaptability, and economic impact, SMEs are categorized based on whether they maintain their assets, income, or workforce below prescribed limits. The term "small and midsize enterprise" is interpreted differently across nations, with size criteria and industry-specific factors often considered. Despite their relatively small scale, SMEs play a pivotal role in the economic prosperity of nations worldwide. Their significant numbers, coupled with substantial workforce contributions and entrepreneurial dynamism, enable them to drive market innovation (Drebler, 2024; Erturk et al., 2024). These enterprises are prevalent across almost all economic sectors, particularly in industries requiring lower labor costs and minimal initial investments. Common examples include legal services, dental practices, restaurants, and bars. In many economies, particularly those of developing nations, SMEs serve as vital components (Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024; Fajarika et al., 2024; Morelli et al., 2024). SMEs represent the majority of businesses globally, playing an essential role in job creation and the expansion of the global economy. It is estimated that they constitute over 90% of enterprises worldwide and provide employment to more than 50% of the workforce (Raihan, 2024; Fakieh & Wali, 2024). Furthermore, formal SMEs in emerging economies contribute approximately 40% of the GDP (Ndiaye et al., 2018; Mer & Viridi, 2024; Mugano & Dorasamy, 2023). However, rising operational costs have led to a decline in profitability, stagnant growth, and diminished efficiency among SMEs, particularly in regions

like Zamfara State. These challenges have been exacerbated by insecurity issues such as banditry, kidnapping, cattle rustling, and terrorism (Onyigbuo et al., 2023; Bello et al., 2024). Consequently, insecurity has emerged as a major obstacle to corporate performance and sustainable development in the affected areas.

The performance of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) is severely hampered by insecurity. Violence, theft, and terrorism are examples of insecurity that interferes with day-to-day operations. These incidents force firms to close or relocate, which results in lost revenue. Additionally, SMEs find it challenging to plan, carry out strategy, and function regularly due to ongoing threats or unpredictable violence. High levels of insecurity put SMEs at danger of theft or damage, which boosts insurance costs and strains their finances. Additionally, residents and consumers may leave high-risk locations for safer ones, thus limiting SMEs' potential client base. Insecure regions are less attractive to investors, making it difficult for SMEs to secure funding or partnerships for expansion. Financial institutions are often hesitant to lend to businesses in insecure regions due to the high risk of default, making it harder for SMEs to access loans and capital.

More so, few studies had been conducted on insecurity and SMEs performance in different industrial operations in Nigeria (Abdul-Azeez, et al., 2024; Dimitriadis, 2024) but not in the dimension of this current study on insecurity in terms of kidnapping, banditry and cattle rustling, and SMEs performance in terms of sales volume, profitability and efficiency of SMEs in Zamfara state. Despite the studies on insecurity, it is still unclear how it has effect on SMEs performance (Omeje, et al., 2023; Isaac, et al., 2023; Fuchs, & Najmaei, 2023). Recent studies that had researched on insecurity and SMEs performance had little literature, and their findings are contradictory and had mixed outcomes in the field of human resource management practice (Hassan, & Umar, 2024; Nwagwu, & Enwelum, 2024; Odusote, & Bello, 2024; Dimitriadis, 2024; Iyoha, & Nkemdilim, 2024; Morelli, et al., 2024). It is based on these aforementioned gaps that the study examines insecurity and the performance of small and medium-scale enterprises in

Zamfara state as a fair of contribution to knowledge. The main objective of this study was to examines insecurity and SMEs performance in Zamfara state.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Insecurity

Insecurity is a sense of uncertainty, fear, or vulnerability brought on by the lack of safety or protection. In today's discourse, insecurity is frequently associated with the threats posed by criminal activity, political instability, and social unrest. When the security and stability of people, groups, and even entire countries are under jeopardy, it is referred to as an insecure situation. Studies had argued that insecurity results from formal institutions, such law enforcement and government agencies, failing to adequately safeguard citizens, leaving them vulnerable to crimes like cattle rustling, banditry, and kidnapping (Ojo, 2024; Thompson,). These illegal acts have a political and social underpinning, and they are frequently linked together. However, insecurity can take on several manifestations which can be physical, economic, social and political, environmental, human insecurities among others. Uncertainty about one's financial future can result from a variety of factors, including unemployment, income loss, or restricted access to essential resources like housing, healthcare, and food which is related to economic insecurity (Westbrook, 2024). It also covers worries about erratic economic conditions or detrimental policies that affect people's ability to make a living. The threat or worry of suffering physical pain, losing one's life, or inflicting harm to assets is known as physical insecurity (Jatto, 2024). It covers hazards including assault, violence, theft, and property damage brought on by disputes or illegal activity. Many insecurity factors in cultures can include political instability, corruption, a weak legal system, and inefficient government (Odusote, & Bello, 2024). That is conflicts based on ideology, religion, or ethnicity frequently make social and political instability worse. Conflicts based on ideology, religion, and ethnicity often exacerbate social

and political instability. Fear or uncertainty about political and social institutions is a defining feature of social and political unrest and insecurity (Bar-Tal, 2020). That is, the unrest that pervades a society can be caused by political instability, corruption, weak legal systems, and incompetent governance.

Risks associated with limited resources, catastrophes caused by climate change, and loss of biodiversity are all part of environmental insecurity (Jain, et al., 2024). Furthermore, environmental instability can increase conflicts over resources, such as water or land, and induce migration and displacement. The conventional description of security is broadened to encompass economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security under the umbrella of human security (Reinsberg, et al., 2024). Instead of only concentrating on state-centric security, it protects individuals and tackles the underlying issues that lead to insecurity, such as hunger, poverty, violence, and infringements of human rights. In contemporary settings like Nigeria, acts of banditry, abduction, and cattle rustling are frequently linked to insecurity since they put people and communities in hazard on both a physical and financial level (Igwe, et al., 2024; Aliyu, et al., 2024; Duchi, et al., 2024). Particularly in emerging countries like Nigeria, insecurity especially in the form of banditry, kidnapping, and livestock rustling had grown to be a draculin bane (Mbam, et al., 2024; Ayegbusi, 2024). These illegal actions undermine official authority, cause socioeconomic development to be hampered, and destabilize communities in Nigeria (John, 2022).

Banditry: Banditry is a type of organized crime that typically entails armed groups with members carrying out violent crimes like robberies, extortions, and assaults on communities. Emmanuel, et al. (2024), poverty, unemployment, and a lax governmental presence particularly in rural areas are major factors that contribute to banditry. That is, strategic zones where societal anarchy and terrorism result from bandit groups that have developed into quasi-militant groups that

oppose government authority. The failure of the state to offer security, job opportunities, and education in economically poor communities is a common source of banditry (Adegbam, & Kugbayi, 2024). That is, people who feel marginalized are compelled to turn to illegal activity in order to survive. Insufficient governance and law enforcement, particularly in rural regions, leave gaps that might be exploited by bandits, Aderayo, & Omojowo, 2024; Ojo, 2024). These gangs are made more powerful by the absence of governmental presence and the slow responses to illegal activity.

Kidnapping: Ransom kidnapping has grown to be a profitable criminal activity, especially in areas with weak law enforcement and political unrest. Kidnappers frequently target affluent people, well-known characters, or anyone who is thought to have access to huge sums of money, including foreign nationals. Kidnapping is an appealing illegal activity for both individuals and organized groups due to the financial benefits that come with paying a ransom. Local communities occasionally assist kidnapping since they are in financial need (Abdulyakeen, & Mumuni, 2024) and political unrest and corruption hastening factors in the growth of kidnapping in Nigeria (Liu, 2021).

Cattle Rustling: Another important component of insecurity, especially in rural and agricultural communities, is cattle rustling. It entails the theft of animals, frequently coupled with violence and property damage. Cattle rustling not only negatively impacts cattle herders' livelihood but also intensifies interethnic tensions between farming and herding communities that is inflicted with insecurity (Duruji, & Bella, 2024). Rustling leads to the loss of cattle, which is a significant source of revenue and food for many pastoral communities and causes economic displacement and frequently pushes people to engage in further illegal activity (Julius, & Odemero, 2024). Conflicts between ethnic groups are often sparked and intensified by cattle rustling which mostly emanated from banditry and kidnapping of herders (Ojo, & Ojewale, 2024).

SMEs Performance Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are defined differently in each country based on rules that are typically based on asset size, yearly turnover, or personnel count. According to the European Commission, SMEs are categorized as enterprises with less than 250 people and an annual turnover not exceeding €50 million (EC, 2024). SMEs in Nigeria are commonly characterized as companies with 10-199 workers and an annual revenue between ₦5 million and ₦500 million (SMEDAN, 2024). These SMEs are essential to reducing poverty, creating jobs, and diversifying the economy. SMEs have a major role in innovation, job creation, and economic growth. Over 90% of enterprises and 50% of jobs worldwide are held by SMEs (OECD, 2024). Because of their inventiveness and adaptability, they can react quickly to changes in the market, which encourages competition and boosts output. SMEs, mostly in the non-oil sector, employ 84% of the labor force in Nigeria and make up roughly 48% of the country's GDP (SMEDAN, 2024). That is country's economic sustainability depends heavily on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), especially when it comes to promoting innovation, creating jobs, and reducing poverty (Belgibayeva, et al., 2022). Nonetheless, obstacles like insufficient funding, limited technological uptake, and restrictive regulatory frameworks still restrict their potential, especially in developing nations (Kondala, et al., 2024). SMEs performance in the ability of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to meet their goals and objectives in areas like sales growth, profitability, operational efficiency, and competitiveness in operating markets (Oduro, 2024). Boosting SMEs performance in the current emergence market need strategic adoption and application of innovative technologies in operations (Sudarnice, et al., 2024). Key performance indicators for SMEs sales volume, profitability, and efficiency.

Sales Volume: Sales volume is the amount of goods or services that a small and medium-sized business sells in a specific time frame. Recent studies indicate that a consistent increase in sales volume is frequently used to gauge how well a SME's goods are received by the market strengths strategies and the adoption innovative technologies in operations (Wu, et al., 2024; Obadia, & Vida, 2024; Sudarnice, et al., 2024). Increased sales volume, which is frequently associated with successful marketing campaigns, client loyalty, and product innovation, is a sign of strong consumer demand.

Profitability: An SME's profitability indicates its capacity to make money after paying for running expenses. Research highlights that SMEs' sustainability and expansion are significantly influenced by their profitability (Bella, et al., 2024; Martins, et al., 2022). According to the literature, pricing tactics, economies of scale, and effective cost control are essential for profitability (Sa'diah, & Suparman, 2024).

Efficiency: The best use of resources to maximize output is referred to as efficiency in SMEs. Reductions in expenses, higher-quality products, and a competitive edge are frequently the results of operational efficiency. Research suggests that SMEs' efficiency is greatly impacted by the use of technology and the improvement of employee productivity (AlZayani, et al., 2024; Jones, et al., 2024).

Insecurity and SMEs Performance

SMEs faced great deal of challenges as a result of insecurity, especially in areas where there is a lot of conflict, violence, or criminal activity. Banditry, abduction, and livestock rustling are among the problems that pose the greatest threat to SMEs activities in Nigeria (Ogar, et al., 2023; Nkata, & Okpanocha, 2022). In these kinds of settings, the profitability, sales volume, and operational efficiency of SMEs are all significantly impacted negatively (Asogwa, et al., 2023; Onyekwelu, & Azubike, 2022). Insecure environments deter customers from visiting business locations, leading to reduced foot traffic and online engagement (For instance, in northern Nigeria, regions affected by banditry have seen a sharp decline in sales as buyers avoid traveling for fear of attacks.

Unsafe surroundings discourage clients from entering commercial spaces, which lowers foot traffic and decreases online interaction. Highway robberies and kidnappings cause supply chain disruptions, which postpone delivery and cause stock shortages, which further hurts sales. Many SMEs in locations prone to insecurity are compelled to curtail or cease operations, therefore losing out on potentially lucrative business opportunities (Ifeanyi, 2023). Many SMEs in conflict-prone areas are forced to reduce or halt operations, missing out on potential profitable ventures. That is, uncertainty about the future often makes SMEs cautious about investing in growth opportunities. Insecure regions often face a scarcity of skilled labor due to migration, death, or absenteeism caused by the fear of violence. The loss of valuable staff decreases business productivity and operational efficiency.

Theoretical Framework

The relationship between insecurity (such as banditry, kidnapping, and cattle rustling) and the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is studied using a number of theoretical frameworks. The foundation of this study was stakeholder and contingency theories. According to contingency theory, the alignment of an organization with external environmental conditions determines how well it performs (Linh, 2024; Yusuf, et al. 2023). The external environment is risky and uncertain in an insecure setting, necessitating strategic adaptation and response from SMEs. Contingency theory suggests that companies operating in highly insecure regions may need to change their business models, adapt their operations, and invest in security measures to survive and operate efficiently (Romero-Silva, et al., 2024). The contingency theory supported this study that, SMEs in uncertain environments perform better if they are able to adapt their strategies and operations to the changing external threats of uncertainty. Stakeholder theory proposes that a company's performance depends on how it manages relationships with stakeholders, such as customers, suppliers, employees, and the community (Córdova-Aguirre, Ramón-Jerónimo, 2024; Appiah-Kubi, (2024). An insecure environment often

leads to the breakdown of these relationships. For example, uncertainty can discourage customers, disrupt supply chains, and make it more difficult to attract and retain talented employees. The theory posits that how SMEs manage their relationships with stakeholders under uncertain conditions can determine their performance outcomes (Shou, et al., 2024; Aisjah, et al., 2023). SMEs in uncertain areas may need to work harder to maintain stakeholder trust to minimize the negative impact of uncertainty on their operations.

Empirical Review

Asogwa et al. (2023) examined the influence of security challenges on the sustainability of SMEs in Nigeria. The study aimed to assess how security concerns affect the performance of SMEs. A quantitative research approach was adopted, and annual secondary data were gathered from the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) and the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, focusing on incidents such as Boko Haram attacks, kidnappings, and armed robberies. To validate the model, preliminary diagnostic tests, including the Augmented Dickey-Fuller unit root test and a cointegration test, were performed, revealing a long-term relationship between security issues and SME performance in Nigeria. The estimation was conducted using a multiple regression model based on Ordinary Least Squares (OLS). The results demonstrated that security challenges have significantly and negatively affected the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Nigeria. Recommendations were made for the Federal Government to implement robust measures to combat the adverse effects of Boko Haram activities, kidnappings, and armed robberies on the nation's socio-economic development. It was suggested that specialized units within the Nigerian Army be established, focusing on counter-terrorism strategies, asymmetric and desert warfare, alongside a national guard composed of highly skilled personnel capable of effectively addressing insurgency and related crimes.

The impact of kidnapping and political instability on investment in the Nigerian economy was examined by Emmanuel et al. (2024). Data relevant to this objective, spanning the years 2006 to 2022, were sourced

from the World Bank Indicators and Global Governance Indicators. In the study, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis was applied following the completion of preliminary tests. Political stability and the absence of violence/terrorism (PSAVTE) were treated as independent variables, while Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as a percentage of GDP served as the dependent variable. The analysis revealed a negative relationship between FDI and PSAVTE, with the F-statistic of the regression result calculated at 1.082523, indicating a lack of statistical significance. Additionally, the probability value of the F-statistic, recorded as 0.314615, exceeded the threshold significance level of 0.05, further confirming the absence of a statistically significant relationship among the variables. An R^2 value of 0.067311 indicated that approximately 6.73% of the variation in the dependent variable could be attributed to the independent variables. Despite all variables being stationary and significant at their respective levels, no long-term or causal relationship was identified between FDI and PSAVTE. The findings suggest that kidnapping and political instability exert a detrimental effect on investment, as the fear of business disruptions during conflicts influences investment decisions. To address these challenges, it was recommended that the government prioritize reducing unemployment, as high unemployment rates contribute to social vices, criminal activity, and political instability.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a survey research design with the main method used for data collection. The use of survey research design is due to the fact that data was collected by administering a questionnaire to the subjects to obtain factual information and make the analysis of the results clearer. The study was a quantitative in nature and had two main variables namely insecurity (banditry, cattle rustling, Kidnapping) and SME performance (turnover, efficiency, profitability) with three proxies each. The data source used for the variables and proxies was a closed questionnaire administered duly to SMEs in the 14 local government areas of Zamfara state. The focus of this study was on SME owners located in Zamfara State, Nigeria. According to the most recent survey conducted

by the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN, 2024), a total of 1,236 small business owners were identified across the 14 local government areas in the state. These areas included Gusau, Tsafe, Bungudu, Maru, Kaura-Namoda, Zurmi, Shinkafi, Birnin-Magaji, Talata-Mafara, Bakura, Maradun, Anka, Bukkuyum, and Gummi. Out of the 1,236 enterprises recorded, 1,222 were categorized as small-scale enterprises, while 14 were classified as medium-sized businesses, collectively forming the study's target population. A simple random sampling technique was employed for the selection of the sample. The process involved

writing the names of the SMEs on separate pieces of paper, placing these papers into a basket, and then shaking the basket to ensure randomness in selection. This method was designed to provide each enterprise an equal opportunity to be chosen, thereby minimizing the potential for bias. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the selected SME owners in the 14 local government areas of Zamfara State. The sample size was determined and distributed using Taro Yamane's formula: The sample size was determined using the following calculation: Yamane (1967). The sample size for this study was estimated using the Taro-Yamane formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: N = Population Size
1 = Constant

n = Sample size

e = Error of Margin (0.05)²

$$n = \frac{1236}{1 + 1236(0.05)^2} \quad n = \frac{1236}{1 + 1236(0.0025)} = \frac{1236}{1 + 3.09}$$

$$n = \frac{1236}{4.09}$$

$$n = 139.41$$

Approximately = 302 Respondents

However, the study considered a sample size of 302 and 302 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the study participants. The study used primary data source in the form of a structured questionnaire to collect responses from the participants. Primary data served as the key data collection tool for the study. Data was collected in 14 local government areas of Zamfara State and this sample size was randomly selected. The primary data supports the participants' position on the impact of uncertainty on the performance of small and medium enterprises in Zamfara State, Nigeria.

We tested the hypotheses using multiple regression analysis and the study model looks like this:

$$PR = \alpha + \beta_1 KNP + \beta_2 BD + \beta_3 CR + E_i \dots 1$$

$$SV = \alpha + \beta_1 KNP + \beta_2 BD + \beta_3 CR + E_i \dots 2$$

$$EFF = \alpha + \beta_1 KNP + \beta_2 BD + \beta_3 CR + E_i \dots 3$$

Where PR= Profitability, EFF= Efficiency, SV= Sales Volume as the dependent variables, α is the intercept, β_1 , β_2 , and β_3 , are the parameters to be estimated as the independent variables such as KNP= Kidnapping, BD= Banditry, and CR= Cattle Rustling,

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tests of Hypotheses one

H0₁: Kidnapping has no effect on sales volume, profitability and efficiency of SMEs in Zamfara state.

$$PR = \alpha + \beta_1 KNP + \beta_2 BD + \beta_3 CR + E_i \dots 1$$

Table 1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.689 ^a	.475	.470	.38179

a. Predictors: (Constant), CR, KNP, BD

Source: Produced with SPSS version 27.0.1

Table 1 presents the Model Summary, where the R value is 0.689, indicating a moderate positive relationship between the predictors (CR, KNP, BD) and the dependent variable. The R Square value of 0.475 suggests that approximately 47.5% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the model. The Adjusted R Square, slightly lower at 0.470, accounts for the number of predictors, showing

a similar level of explained variance while adjusting for model complexity. The Standard Error of the Estimate (0.38179) indicates the average deviation of the observed values from the predicted values. Based on the decision rule, if R Square is significantly above 0.5, the model is considered strong, but here, with an R Square below 0.5, the model demonstrates moderate explanatory power.

Table 2 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	39.802	3	13.267	91.021	.000 ^b
	Residual	44.020	302	.146		
	Total	83.822	305			

a. Dependent Variable: PR

b. Predictors: (Constant), CR, KNP, BD

Source: Produced with SPSS version 27.0.1

Table 2 presents the results of an ANOVA test assessing the impact of the predictors (CR, KNP, BD) on the dependent variable (PR). The F-value of 91.021, with a significance level (Sig.) of 0.000, indicates that the model is statistically significant, as the p-value is less

than the conventional threshold of 0.05. This means there is strong evidence that the predictors collectively explain a significant portion of the variance in PR. The decision rule is to reject the null hypothesis, concluding that CR, KNP, and BD significantly influence PR.

Table 3 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.024	.285		3.598	.000
	KNP	.679	.042	.690	16.243	.000
	BD	.741	.030	.797	24.593	.000
	CR	.717	.043	.670	16.821	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PR

Source: Produced with SPSS version 27.0.1

Table 3 presents the coefficients for a regression model predicting PR (presumably Performance or a related dependent variable) from three independent variables: Knowledge of New Processes (KNP), Business Development (BD), and Customer Relations (CR). The decision rule typically follows a

significance threshold of 0.05, and all independent variables (KNP, BD, CR) have p-values (Sig.) of 0.000, indicating strong statistical significance. The unstandardized coefficients (B) show the direction and magnitude of influence on PR, with BD having the largest impact (B = 0.741), followed by CR

(B = 0.717) and KNP (B = 0.679). The standardized coefficients (Beta) confirm that BD ($\beta = 0.797$) is the strongest predictor. Thus,

all variables significantly and positively influence PR.

Tests of Hypotheses two

HO₂: Banditry has no influence on sales volume, profitability and efficiency of SMEs in Zamfara state.

$$SV = \alpha + \beta_1 KNP + \beta_2 BD + \beta_3 CR + E_i \dots 2$$

Table 4 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.639 ^a	.409	.403	.41634

a. Predictors: (Constant), CR, KNP, BD

Source: Produced with SPSS version 27.0.1

Table 4 presents the model summary with an R value of 0.639, indicating a moderate positive correlation between the predictors (CR, KNP, and BD) and the dependent variable. The R Square value of 0.409 suggests that approximately 40.9% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the model. The Adjusted R Square, which accounts for the number of predictors, is slightly lower at 0.403, indicating that the model remains a good fit

even when adjusting for additional predictors. The standard error of the estimate (0.41634) represents the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line, which is relatively small, suggesting a reliable model. According to the decision rule, since the R Square is substantial, the model provides a reasonable explanation for the variation in the dependent variable.

Table 5 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	36.174	3	12.058	69.565	.000 ^b
	Residual	52.347	302	.173		
	Total	88.521	305			

a. Dependent Variable: SV

b. Predictors: (Constant), CR, KNP, BD

Source: Produced with SPSS version 27.0.1

Table 5 presents the ANOVA results, which assess the overall significance of the regression model. The regression sum of squares (36.174) represents the variance explained by the predictors (CR, KNP, BD), while the residual sum of squares (52.347) reflects the unexplained variance. The model's F-statistic is 69.565, which is large and indicates that the

model is a good fit. The significance value (Sig.) is 0.000, which is less than the typical threshold of 0.05, meaning the regression model is statistically significant. Based on the decision rule, since the p-value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the predictors significantly influence the dependent variable (SV).

Table 6 Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		

1	(Constant)	.728	.310		2.345	.020
	KNP	.196	.046	.193	4.293	.000
	BD	.941	.027	.953	35.259	.000
	CR	.599	.053	.558	11.286	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SV

Source: Produced with SPSS version 27.0.1

Table 6 presents the coefficients for the regression model, revealing the relationship between the predictors (KNP, BD, CR) and the dependent variable (SV). The unstandardized coefficient for the constant is 0.728, indicating the expected value of SV when all predictors are zero. Each predictor shows a significant positive relationship with SV: KNP has an unstandardized coefficient of 0.196 ($p = 0.000$), suggesting that a one-unit increase in KNP leads to an increase of 0.196 in SV; BD has a much larger coefficient of 0.941 ($p = 0.000$), indicating that it has the strongest effect on SV, with a one-unit increase resulting in a 0.941

increase in SV; CR has an unstandardized coefficient of 0.599 ($p = 0.000$), signifying a significant positive impact as well. The standardized coefficients (Beta) further highlight the relative importance of the predictors, with BD (Beta = 0.953) being the most influential, followed by CR (Beta = 0.558) and KNP (Beta = 0.193). All predictors are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating strong support for their inclusion in the model. The decision rule confirms that since all coefficients are significant, the model effectively captures the influence of KNP, BD, and CR on SV.

Tests of Hypotheses three

HO₃: Cattle rustling has no effect on sales volume, profitability and efficiency of SMEs in Zamfara state.

$$EFF = \alpha + \beta_1 KNP + \beta_2 BD + \beta_3 CR + E_i \dots 3$$

Table 7 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.727 ^a	.528	.524	.34935

a. Predictors: (Constant), CR, KNP, BD

Source: Produced with SPSS version 27.0.1

Table 7 presents the model summary, showing an R value of 0.727, which indicates a strong positive correlation between the predictors (CR, KNP, and BD) and the dependent variable. The R Square value of 0.528 signifies that approximately 52.8% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the model, indicating a substantial explanatory power. The Adjusted R Square is 0.524, suggesting that the model remains robust even after adjusting for

the number of predictors. Additionally, the standard error of the estimate (0.34935) indicates a relatively small average distance of the observed values from the regression line, which enhances the reliability of the model. According to the decision rule, the high R Square value confirms that the model effectively captures the relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable, supporting its use for predictive analysis.

Table 8 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	41.269	3	13.756	112.717	.000 ^b
	Residual	36.857	302	.122		
	Total	78.127	305			

a. Dependent Variable: EFF

b. Predictors: (Constant), CR, KNP, BD

Source: Produced with SPSS version 27.0.1

Table 8 displays the ANOVA results for the regression model assessing the impact of the predictors (CR, KNP, and BD) on the dependent variable (EFF). The regression sum of squares is 41.269, with 3 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 13.756. The F-statistic is 112.717, and the significance value (Sig.) is 0.000, indicating that the model is statistically significant at the conventional alpha level of 0.05. This implies that at least one of the predictors has a significant effect on the

dependent variable. The residual sum of squares is 36.857, with 302 degrees of freedom, contributing to a mean square of 0.122, which suggests that the unexplained variance is minimal compared to the explained variance. According to the decision rule, the significant F-value supports the model's validity, indicating that the predictors collectively contribute meaningfully to explaining the variation in the dependent variable.

Table 9 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.889	.261		3.414	.001
	KNP	-.085	.038	-.089	-2.216	.027
	BD	.250	.051	.214	4.928	.000
	CR	.626	.045	.621	14.071	.000

a. Dependent Variable: EFF

Source: Produced with SPSS version 27.0.1

Table 9 presents the coefficients for the regression model predicting the dependent variable, EFF. The constant term is 0.889, indicating the predicted value of EFF when all predictors are zero, and it is statistically significant ($p = 0.001$). Among the predictors, KNP has a negative unstandardized coefficient of -0.085, which is significant ($p = 0.027$), suggesting that an increase in KNP is associated with a decrease in EFF. In contrast, BD has a positive coefficient of 0.250 ($p = 0.000$), indicating that higher values of BD are associated with increased EFF. Similarly, CR shows a strong positive coefficient of 0.626 ($p = 0.000$), implying a significant positive effect on EFF. The standardized coefficients (Beta) reveal the relative importance of each predictor, with CR having the largest impact (Beta = 0.621), followed by BD (Beta = 0.214) and KNP (Beta = -0.089). The decision rule suggests that CR and BD significantly influence EFF positively, while KNP has a negative impact, indicating that enhancing BD and CR would likely improve EFF.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the above findings, the study revealed a significant negative effect of insecurity on the performance of SMEs in Zamfara State. The study also revealed concretely from the finding that insecurity had a significant negative effect on the performance of SMEs in terms of sales volume, profitability and efficiency in Zamfara state. Findings from this study is in alignment with previous studies conceptually and empirically that insecurity had significant negative effect and impact on the performance of SMEs and other corporate settings in Zamfara state and North-West region of Nigeria and holistically other part of the world where there is challenges of insecurity (Omeje, et al., 2023; Isaac, et al., 2023; Fuchs, & Najmaei, 2023; Hassan, & Umar, 2024; Nwagwu, & Enwelum, 2024; Odusote, & Bello, 2024; Dimitriadis, 2024; Iyoha, & Nkemdilim, 2024; Morelli, et al., 2024).

The first hypothesis, which was stated as **HO₁**: Kidnapping has no effect on sales volume,

profitability and efficiency of SMEs in Zamfara state and revealed statistical test that kidnapping had negative effect on sales volume, profitability and efficiency of SMEs in Zamfara state. That is, the level of kidnapping in the Zamfara state had crippled the performance of SMEs. This finding has been linked with the findings of previous studies conceptually and empirically, that kidnapping had significant negative effect on the performance of SMEs in Zamfara State of Nigeria (Ogar, et al., 2023; Abdulyakeen, & Mumuni, 2024; Ayegbusi, 2024; Emmanuel, et al., 2024; Mbam, et al., 2024). The second hypothesis tested was stated as follows: **HO₂:** Banditry has no influence on sales volume, profitability and efficiency of SMEs in Zamfara state and affirmed statistically that banditry had significant negative effect on sales volume, profitability and efficiency of SMEs in Zamfara state. This finding divulged that the level of banditry had dynamically crippled the operational performance and sustainability of SMEs in Zamfara State. Recent studies conceptually and empirically underpinned this finding that banditry operations in Zamfara state had negative effect and impact on SMEs performance (Abdulyakeen, & Mumuni, 2024; Aderayo, & Omojowo, 2024; Aderayo, & Omojowo, 2024; Igwe, et al., 2024; Mershakka, et al., 2024; Ojewale, 2024; Thompson, et al., 2024). The third hypothesis, which was stated as **HO₃:** Cattle rustling has no effect on sales volume, profitability and efficiency of SMEs in Zamfara state and the finding uncovered that cattle rustling had negative effect on sales volume, profitability and efficiency of SMEs in Zamfara state. That is, the growth in cattle rustling had negatively affected the sustainable performance of SMEs in Zamfara state. The finding was in affiliation with the findings previous studies that the activities of cattle rustling had negative effect and impact on the SMEs performance in Zamfara state (Julius, & Odemero, 2024; Omeje, et al., 2023; Onyigbuo, et al., 2023). The contingency theory, which is related to the study's findings, holds that SMEs performance is determined by its strategic alignment with external environment (Linh, 2024; Yusuf, et al. 2023). The stakeholder

theory also agreed with the study's findings that SMEs' performance outcomes can be determined by the extents of managers relationships with stakeholders in unpredictable circumstances. (Shou, et al., 2024; Aisjah, et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this, it concluded concretely that insecurity had significant effect negatively on SMEs performance in Zamfara state. These conclusions exposed that the level of insecurity in Zamfara state had significant negative effect on the performance of SMEs in terms of sales volume, profitability and efficiency. Based on these conclusions, the study further concluded that insecurity is a deterrent and impediment to SMEs performance in this state in Nigeria. The conclusion had addressed the study attained its objective, which was to examine insecurity and SMEs performance in Zamfara state. The study concluded that the kidnapping, banditry and cattle rustling had a negative significant effect on SMEs performance in Zamfara state.

The study suggested pressuring the government to strengthen security presence and efficacy in impacted areas. This can entail stepping up the deployment of security guards, enhancing intelligence collection, and guarding vital thoroughfares and marketplaces. Encourage collaborations between law enforcement, SMEs, and local communities to raise knowledge and alertness regarding security. Encourage tighter cooperation between security authorities and SME associations so that they may exchange information, plan responses, and work together to solve security issues. A safer and more favourable business climate in Zamfara State would result from the implementation of these proposals, which would necessitate coordinated efforts from government agencies, local communities, SME groups, and other stakeholders to cured the insecurity menace.

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