# Assessing the impact of porous borders on banditry and kidnapping in north west Nigeria

## By
## ADELANI Sunday PhD., Adoyi Onoja Prof.
**1&2Institute of Governance and Development Studies, Nasarawa State University Keffi, Nigeria**

## Abstract

*The study examined the impact of porous borders on the frequency and severity of banditry and kidnapping in North West Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative research approach. The population used for the study comprised of security personnel, local government officials, victims of banditry and kidnapping, and residents from communities along the North West borders of Nigeria. Given the challenges of researching all subjects within a population and the difficulty in obtaining exact population figures for the target group in North East Nigeria, the sample size was calculated using Cochran's (1977) formula and stratified sampling technique was used to select the respondents for this study. The study employed questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The data collected for the study was analyzed using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS 3.0 software. The study found that porous borders have positive and significant impact on banditry and kidnapping in North West Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study concludes that porous borders positively and significantly influence banditry and kidnapping in North West Nigeria. The study thus recommended that Government should adopt a multifaceted approach to border management. This should include the establishment of more thorough identity checks and the use of biometric systems at all entry points to prevent kidnappers from crossing the border undetected. Strengthening the legal framework surrounding border security with harsher penalties for smuggling and kidnapping can act as a deterrent.*

**Key words:** Banditry, Borders Management, kidnapping, Porous Border,

## Introduction

The phenomena of banditry and kidnapping are pressing global security issues, affecting diverse regions worldwide. Globally, these activities are driven by a myriad of factors ranging from socio-economic disparities to weak law enforcement and political instability. Regions such as Latin America and parts of Asia have long grappled with the challenges posed by organized crime groups engaging in these acts as significant sources of revenue and control (Smith & Green, 2022). In Africa, the situation is similarly dire, with countries like South Africa and Somalia experiencing high rates of criminal kidnappings and banditry linked to both local insurgencies and widespread poverty (Johnson & Mbeki, 2023).

In Nigeria, banditry and kidnapping have evolved into critical national security issues, particularly accentuated by the country's complex socio-political landscape. These activities are not only lucrative for the criminal elements but also serve as a tool for political manipulation and community intimidation. The escalation of such incidents in Nigeria has been particularly noted since the early 2000s, with significant spikes in regions that are economically marginalized and poorly policed (Okeke & Adekoya, 2024).

* Corresponding author: ADELANI Sunday
Department of Security and Strategic Studies, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria.

North West Nigeria has emerged as a hotspot for these criminal activities, where the prevalence of banditry and kidnapping has surged dramatically. The states within this region, such as Zamfara, Kaduna, and Katsina, have reported some of the highest incidences, which are increasingly linked to the broader issues of communal clashes and insurgency. The persistence of these crimes in North West Nigeria can be attributed to several factors, including economic hardship, unemployment, and the proliferation of small arms. However, one of the most significant contributors is the porosity of Nigeria's borders in this region (Lawal & Musa, 2025).

Porous borders significantly exacerbate the challenges of banditry and kidnapping by facilitating the free movement of criminal gangs and the smuggling of arms and illicit goods. These borders allow not only for the easy escape and entry of criminals but also for the operational expansion of criminal networks across national boundaries, making law enforcement efforts complicated and often ineffective. The geographic and political complexities of border management in North West Nigeria have thus made it a strategic point for such criminal activities, demanding urgent attention and comprehensive strategies to enhance border security and control (Hamisu & Turner, 2023).

The escalation of banditry and kidnapping in North West Nigeria poses severe socio-economic and security challenges, undermining regional stability and hindering development. These criminal activities have been increasingly prevalent, with North West Nigeria experiencing some of the highest rates nationally (Okeke & Adekoya, 2024). Banditry and kidnapping not only threaten the safety and well-being of the populace but also impede economic activities, eroding investor confidence and disrupting daily life.

One pivotal factor contributing to the rise of these security issues is the porosity of Nigeria's borders in the North West region. Porous borders facilitate the unchecked movement of armed groups and the illicit flow of weapons, exacerbating the security situation. The ability of criminals to move freely across borders complicates efforts by security agencies to curb these activities and prosecute those responsible (Hamisu & Turner, 2023). Despite numerous governmental and international efforts to secure these borders, persistent gaps in border management have allowed banditry and kidnapping to flourish, creating a cycle of violence and lawlessness that is difficult to break.

The pervasive issues of banditry and kidnapping in North West Nigeria pose significant threats to national security, economic stability, and societal well-being. Despite extensive research on the general impacts of criminal activities in Nigeria, there remains a distinct gap in understanding how porous borders specifically exacerbate these issues in the North West region. Porous borders facilitate the unchecked flow

of illicit arms and the mobility of criminal networks, which significantly contribute to the complexity and escalation of criminal activities such as banditry and kidnapping (Hamisu & Turner, 2023).

Furthermore, while some studies have addressed the broader implications of weak border controls, they have not sufficiently explored the tactical dynamics through which porous borders directly impact the operational capabilities of bandits and kidnappers in North West Nigeria (Johnson & Mbeki, 2023). There is also a significant deficiency in the literature regarding effective countermeasures tailored to the unique geographical and social fabric of North West Nigeria, which is crucial for developing targeted interventions that could mitigate these issues (Smith & Green, 2022). Despite studies conducted in this area, most of the concentrate on only single variable. For instance, Duke, et al. (2023) focused on porous borders, banditry, and insecurity in Northern Nigeria: A human security perspective in the country's Fourth Republic, Uwakwe, et al. (2023) focused on cross-border armed banditry and its impact on Nigeria's national security, Adegboye and Dube (2024) focused on the facilitation of arms smuggling through porous borders.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to examined the impact of porous borders on the frequency and severity of banditry and kidnapping in North West Nigeria. This study hypotheses as follows:

$H_{o1}$: Porous borders have no significant impact on banditry in North West Nigeria.

$H_{o2}$: Porous borders have no significant impact on kidnapping in North West Nigeria.

**Literature Review**

**Banditry**

According to Uwakwe and Attah (2023), banditry is described as part of a broader spectrum of security challenges that include terrorism and insurgency, facilitated by porous borders. These criminal activities are significantly enabled by the unregulated borders, which allow the easy movement of non-Nigerians into Nigeria, heightening the insecurity in the region. The study emphasizes the interaction between unguarded borders and the escalation of banditry, reflecting on historical and current socio-political dynamics that contribute to the persistence and complexity of this issue (Uwakwe & Attah, 2023). Smith and Green (2022) define banditry as "criminal activities that involve the use of force or violence by armed groups against civilians for purposes of theft, extortion, and other forms of economic gain." This definition emphasizes the organized and aggressive nature of banditry, highlighting its economic motivations and its impact on civilian populations.

Banditry is a complex phenomenon encompassing a range of criminal activities. Egwu (2016) specifically defines it as the act of stealing livestock, particularly from ranches or herders. Expanding on this, Uche

and Iwuamadi (2018) illustrate banditry as including a variety of violent and criminal acts such as cattle rustling, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug abuse, arson, sexual assault, and even large-scale massacres perpetrated by armed groups, often leading to retaliatory violence. These activities significantly threaten national security.

Johnson and Mbeki (2023) describe banditry as "acts of armed robbery and violence by loosely organized groups operating in rural and often remote areas, typically without any political objectives." This definition focuses on the geographical and operational aspects of banditry, distinguishing it from politically motivated insurgencies or terrorism. Okeke and Adekoya (2024) articulate banditry as "the practice of plundering by gangs, especially in areas with weak state presence, which includes activities such as cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, and highway robbery." This definition provides a broader view of banditry, incorporating various forms of criminal behavior and emphasizing the context of weak governance.

**Kidnapping**

Rufus & Ogbe (2025) defined kidnapping as a critical security issue that significantly impacts the socio-political landscape in Northwest Nigeria. They describe kidnapping as not only a direct threat to the lives and welfare of individuals but also as a destabilizing factor that undermines public trust in governmental institutions. This definition is part of a broader discussion on the socio-economic drivers of banditry and criminality, where kidnapping is used by armed groups to finance their operations or exert control over territories (Rufus & Ogbe, 2025). Udosen & Uwak (2021) defined kidnapping through the lens of border security challenges, where porous borders facilitate the movement of criminal elements that engage in kidnapping as part of a broader spectrum of transnational crimes. This definition ties the prevalence of kidnapping directly to failures in border management and highlights the transnational nature of the crime, which is exacerbated by inadequate monitoring and control at national borders (Udosen & Uwak, 2021).

Ngomba (2022) discusses kidnapping in the context of national security challenges at the Nigeria-Niger border. Here, kidnapping is contextualized as a byproduct of broader security lapses that also include banditry and armed robbery. The definition underscores the complex interplay between local criminal activities and broader geopolitical and security dynamics, stressing the need for a multifaceted approach to border security to mitigate such threats (Ngomba, 2022).

**Porous Borders**

Duke et al. (2023) described porous borders as zones of high vulnerability, where inadequate surveillance and control mechanisms lead to national security threats. These borders are depicted as gateways for illegal

activities that undermine state sovereignty and public safety. Onuoha (2024) opined that Africa's porous borders create vulnerabilities, which are manipulated for illegal transnational trafficking that threatens regional and national security. These borders facilitate not only small arms and light weapons trafficking but also human smuggling and drug trafficking, which destabilize the internal security of states. The study highlights the irony of how while legitimate goods face stringent cross-border hurdles, illegal arms flow with relative ease due to the porous nature of African borders, which are inadequately managed and monitored. Rosenje and Adeniyi (2024) emphasized porous border facilitate the illegal movement of people and goods that threaten national security. The porous nature of these borders allows for the unregulated flow of arms and criminals, contributing to increased insecurity and lawlessness, particularly in regions prone to banditry and terrorism.

Porous borders are conceptualized as weak or insufficiently controlled border areas that not only allow unauthorized entries and exits but also contribute to socio-economic and security challenges (Rufus & Ogbe, 2025). Rufus and Ogbe (2025). argued that these borders exacerbate internal conflicts and economic disparities. Porous borders are detailed as regions where official control is limited, facilitating activities like human trafficking, smuggling, and the entry of extremist elements (Nsiegbe & Gabriel, 2024). Nsiegbe and Gabriel (2024) emphasized the need for improved border surveillance and collaborative regional policies. Porous borders are associated with the ease of committing transnational crimes, including smuggling and trafficking. The document stresses the necessity for robust border security measures to curb the inflow of illicit goods and persons (Udosen & Uwak, 2021).

Porous borders in North West Nigeria can be attributed to a variety of factors, each contributing to the complexity of border management and security in the region. One primary factor is the extensive and challenging geographical terrain that makes surveillance and control difficult. The vast expanses of land along the borders with Niger and other neighboring countries are not adequately monitored due to insufficient physical barriers and technological surveillance tools. This geographical challenge is compounded by limited access routes for patrol units and the harsh environmental conditions that can impede effective border patrol operations (Ngomba, 2022).

Another significant factor leading to porous borders in North West Nigeria is inadequate funding and resources allocated to border security agencies. Insufficient funding results in a shortage of necessary equipment, inadequate manpower, and lack of advanced training for border security personnel. This financial constraint limits the operational capacity of border control agencies to effectively monitor and secure the borders, making them susceptible to illegal crossings and activities (Udosen & Uwak, 2021).

Corruption within border security agencies further exacerbates the problem of porous borders. Corruption facilitates the bribery and manipulation of border officials, allowing for the unchecked movement of goods and people across borders. This not only weakens the integrity of border security efforts but also undermines the rule of law, creating systemic vulnerabilities that criminal networks exploit to carry out cross-border crimes such as smuggling and trafficking (Idris, 2021).

Community engagement and cooperation are also lacking in the border management strategy of North West Nigeria. There is often a disconnect between border communities and security agencies, with local populations sometimes harboring mistrust towards authorities due to historical grievances or perceived neglect. Without the cooperation of these communities, it is challenging for security forces to gather intelligence and enforce border security effectively. Building strong relationships with local communities and involving them in border security initiatives could enhance monitoring and reporting of illegal activities, thereby strengthening border control (Ode, 2024).

Addressing the issue of porous borders in North West Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach that includes improving infrastructure, increasing funding, fighting corruption, and fostering community involvement. Each of these elements plays a crucial role in developing a more secure and managed border environment, crucial for the stability and security of not only North West Nigeria but the broader region.

**Empirical Review**

**Porous Borders, Banditry and Kidnapping**

Rufus and Ogbe (2025) examine the root causes of banditry in Northwest Nigeria and its security implications using a historical descriptive approach. Their findings indicate that poverty, unemployment, and resource scarcity are the primary drivers of banditry, which has evolved into a complex network involving other forms of criminality such as cattle rustling and arms smuggling. The study emphasizes the need for a multi-faceted approach to address these underlying socio-economic issues to restore stability. However, the limitation here is the broad scope of the research which, while comprehensive, may overlook specific localized strategies that could be more effective in particular areas

Nsiegbe and Gabriel (2024) focused on the impact of porous borders on banditry in Nigeria's Northwest, utilizing qualitative data from focus groups and observations. Their research underpins the theory that weak border control facilitates the flow of arms and criminals into Nigeria, sustaining and exacerbating banditry. They recommend enhanced border security and community engagement to tackle these challenges. A critique of this study is its potential bias stemming from qualitative data, which might reflect subjective perceptions rather than measurable data.

Rosenje and Adeniyi (2024) in their study on the impact of banditry on Nigeria's security in the Fourth Republic, particularly focused on the Northwest, adopt a descriptive research design utilizing secondary data. They explore the driving factors behind the high levels of banditry in the region, such as unemployment, weak security infrastructure, and porous borders. The study reveals that banditry has significantly undermined peace and development in the Northwest, leading to widespread socio-economic disruptions. A key criticism of their study is the reliance on secondary data, which might not fully capture the current on-ground realities or the nuanced local perspectives of those directly affected by banditry.

Adegboye and Dube (2024) examined the relationship between porous borders and illicit arms dealing in Nigeria, utilizing a structural functionalism theoretical framework. The study, based on qualitative analysis of literature and case studies, concludes that porous borders facilitate the smuggling of weapons and exacerbate security challenges such as banditry and insurgency. The authors recommend enhancing border security through technological investments and regional cooperation. However, the study's reliance on secondary sources might limit its ability to present an updated and nuanced view of the current security situation.

Moliki and Ajetunmobi (2024) focus on the implications of inadequate border security for arms trafficking and its effects on banditry and kidnapping in Nigeria's North West region. Utilizing secondary data from various online sources, the study argues that porous borders significantly contribute to regional insecurity and criminal activities. The recommendations include strengthening border management and enforcing stringent arms control measures. However, the study may benefit from primary data to provide deeper insights into the experiences and perceptions of those directly affected by these security challenges.

Ode (2024) assessed the socio-economic effects of insurgency and armed banditry in Nigeria, linking them to poor border management. Through a review of literature, the study discusses how porous borders facilitate terrorism and other transnational crimes. It calls for sustainable border management strategies and better governance to tackle these issues. The limitation of this study lies in its broad scope and reliance on secondary data, which might not capture localized experiences of border communities.

Onuoha (2023) addressed the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) in Africa, emphasizing the role of porous borders in exacerbating human security issues. The study uses secondary data to analyze how these dynamics hinder peace and democratic development across the continent. It concludes that although African states have implemented several measures to combat SALWs proliferation, these efforts have been insufficient due to the continued ease of arms movement across borders. The study suggests that

stronger governance and security mechanisms are needed, but it lacks recent primary data that might reflect current conditions.

Duke et al. (2023) analyze the relationship between porous borders, banditry, and insecurity from a human security perspective in Northern Nigeria. They employ a mixed-methods approach, gathering data through secondary sources and direct surveys. The findings suggest that inadequate border management contributes to the high incidence of banditry and general insecurity. The study argues for a combination of stricter border control and socio-economic development initiatives to mitigate these issues. A limitation noted in this research is the challenge of generalizing findings across different border areas due to varying local conditions.

Uwakwe et al. (2023) explore the impact of cross-border armed banditry on Nigeria's national security, focusing on the connection between porous borders and increased insecurity. Employing a qualitative research model, the study synthesizes data from books, journals, and online sources to understand how neglected border communities contribute to sustained criminal activities. The study's findings indicate that the lack of governmental presence and cooperation with locals at the borders exacerbates security issues, leading to recommendations for a comprehensive overhaul of Nigeria's border security strategies. A limitation of this study is its reliance on secondary data, which may not fully capture the dynamic and current conditions at the border areas

Ngomba (2022) conducted a study on the challenges of border control and effect on national security: A Case of Nigeria-Niger border by exploring how inadequate border controls contribute to national security issues in Nigeria. The study uses secondary data to analyze the impact of border porosity on security, highlighting issues such as increased banditry and kidnapping. Ngomba recommends improving technological capabilities and training for border security personnel. The study is limited by its reliance on secondary data, which may not capture the latest trends or policy impacts, and could be strengthened by incorporating primary research to provide more current and direct evidence of border control challenges

Udosen and Uwak (2021) analyze the socio-economic effects of insurgency and armed banditry in Nigeria, highlighting the impact of porous borders on national security in their article "Armed Banditry and Border Monitoring: Challenges for Nigeria's Security, Peace, and Sustainable Development." Employing a historical/descriptive research design, the study uses secondary sources to trace the links between weak border control and rising crimes such as trafficking and smuggling. The authors argue that effective border monitoring could significantly reduce these crimes, recommending enhanced surveillance and international cooperation.

Idris (2021) conducted a study on the Nigeria Niger republic border porosity and insecurity: from surveillance to whistleblowing in the management of trans-border arms trafficking critically examines the failures of surveillance systems at the Nigeria-Niger border. The qualitative study, grounded in the theory of information asymmetry, incorporates interviews with stakeholders to identify why traditional surveillance methods are inadequate. Idris suggests that involving local communities in a whistleblowing mechanism could enhance border security. A major critique of this approach is the potential for corruption and misuse of whistleblowing incentives, which the study acknowledges but does not fully explore potential safeguards against such risks.

Yakubu et al. (2021) explore factors influencing kidnapping in Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria. Using a cross-sectional survey design and gathering data from 374 respondents, the study identifies unemployment as a significant driver of kidnapping. The findings suggest that economic empowerment and job creation could mitigate kidnapping. While the study offers specific regional insights, its generalizability to other regions may be limited, and further research could benefit from a mixed-methods approach to deepen the understanding of underlying social dynamics.

Aliome (2019) explored the relationship between migration and national security within the context of Nigeria's porous borders. Using content and comparative analysis methods on secondary data, the study addresses whether migration poses a threat to national security. The key finding is that the porous nature of Nigeria's borders facilitates the uncontrolled influx of migrants, which exacerbates security threats, including terrorism and infectious diseases. A significant limitation of the study is its exclusive reliance on secondary sources, which might not provide the most current data or insights into local sentiments and changes post-data publication.

**Theoretical Framework**

The underpinning theory for this study is Transnationalism theory. This theory was notably developed and articulated by scholars Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton in 1992. They introduced the theory to describe the processes by which immigrants build and maintain multiple social, economic, and political ties that span the borders of their home and host countries. This theory emphasizes the fluidity and continuity of social and life activities across national borders, challenging traditional notions of migration that focus solely on assimilation into the host society. The main ideas of transnationalism include the ongoing interactions, social fields, and networks that connect people across diverse geographical and cultural spaces without necessarily diminishing their ties to their countries of origin.

Following its initial formulation, the theory of transnationalism has been enriched and expanded by numerous scholars in various fields of study. Levitt (2000) and Alarcón (2000), for example, have explored how

transnational practices influence the socio-economic development and cultural identity within immigrant communities, emphasizing the role of technology and remittances in maintaining transnational ties. Additionally, scholars like Vertovec (2000) and Portes (1997) have further nuanced the theory by introducing concepts like "transnational social fields" and "transnationalism from below," respectively, to describe how these cross-border activities are organized and maintained not only by individuals but also through grassroots movements and networks that contribute significantly to social, political, and economic processes across borders.

Despite its contributions to understanding migration dynamics, transnationalism has faced criticism, particularly regarding its applicability across different migrant groups and contexts. Critics argue that the theory may overemphasize the strength of transnational ties and neglect those immigrants who do not engage in sustained cross-border activities. Moreover, there is a critique regarding the potential elitism of transnational experiences, as not all migrants have the resources or opportunity to engage in such activities. However, the relevance of transnationalism to the study of porous borders on banditry and kidnapping in North West Nigeria is significant. The theory provided a robust framework for understanding how the activities of transnational criminal networks are facilitated by porous borders, enabling the flow of illicit goods and services, and how these networks maintain their operations across multiple countries. This insight is crucial for developing targeted policies and interventions that address the root causes and mechanisms of transnational crimes like banditry and kidnapping, which are prevalent in regions with weak border controls.

## Research Methodology

For the purpose of this study quantitative research approach was employed. This approach allows for the collection of data on a large scale, facilitating the examination of relationships between variables through numerical data, which can be systematically analyzed using statistical methods. Quantitative methods enable the generalization of results to a broader population, providing empirical evidence that can support policy decisions aimed at addressing security challenges. Moreover, the use of structured instruments of survey ensures consistency in data collection and enhances the reliability and validity of the findings, essential for formulating effective interventions. The target population for this study include security personnel, local government officials, victims of banditry and kidnapping, and residents from communities along the North West borders of Nigeria. Security personnel and local government officials provide critical insights into the enforcement challenges and policy responses, respectively, highlighting systemic issues and potential areas for intervention. Meanwhile, victims and local residents offer firsthand accounts of the impact of banditry and kidnapping, enriching the study with personal experiences and the socio-economic repercussions on communities.

Given the challenges of researching all subjects within a population and the difficulty in obtaining exact population figures for the target group in North East Nigeria, the sample size was calculated using Cochran's (1977) formula for an infinite or unknown population size. This formula, $n = Z^2 \times P(1-P)/C^2$ where n represents the sample size, Z is the Z-value (1.96) for a 95% confidence interval, C is the margin of error (5%), and P is the assumed population proportion (0.5), yielded a sample size of 384. To account for potential non-responses or dropouts, a 30% attrition rate was added, adjusting the final sample size to 499, consistent with the approaches recommended by Singh and Masuku (2014) and Muritala and Ajetunmobi (2019). And respondents for this study were selected using the stratified sampling techniques.

The study covered Four (4) North West States in Nigeria, the States are Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara State. focusing on the above State is justified due to their shared borders with the Republic of Niger, which make them particularly vulnerable to the transnational challenges of banditry and kidnapping. These states are critically impacted by porous border issues, facilitating the movement of armed groups and criminal networks that exploit these borders to conduct illegal activities. The geographic location and socio-political landscape of Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara make them representative of the broader security issues affecting border states in the region.

For the purpose of this study, primary data was utilized which was obtained through structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed equally to the four states in North West Nigeria (Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara State). To ensure equal distribution of the questionnaire, the sample size of 499 determined was round off to 500; therefore, 125 copies of the questionnaire were distributed in each of the four states in North West, Nigeria. The questionnaires were administered physically with the help of four (4) trained research assistants, which are good in both English and local languages to assist with data collection. Before the full-scale administration, the questionnaire was pilot tested with 10 copies of questionnaire administered in the four (4) state to ensure clarity, relevance, and appropriateness for the local context. Any necessary adjustments were made based on the feedback from the pilot test.

The reliability of the instrument used was accessed using Cronbach alpha. Cronbach alpha value of greater than 0.7 is appropriate (Hair, et al., 2014). Out of 500 copies of questionnaire administered, 398 copies representing 80% of total questionnaire administered were retrieved, valid and useful for the analysis. The data obtained for this study was analyzed using using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 3.0 software. This analytical approach is recommended for its effectiveness in defining measurement and structural models, as well as for hypothesis testing, as discussed by Hair et al. (2021). PLS-SEM is widely used in social sciences and other fields for its ability to handle complex, non-

normally distributed data structures, making it suitable for both exploratory and predictive modeling (Hair, Henseler, & Sarstedt, 2021; Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015; Sarstedt, Ringle, & Hair, 2022).

The analysis was performed using SmartPLS software, employing a methodical two-step approach. First, the measurement model was scrutinized to confirm the constructs' reliability and validity. Following this, the structural model was assessed to explore the relationships between empowerment programs, employment opportunities, and youth migration in Nigeria. This analysis method thoroughly evaluates both direct and indirect effects, providing a detailed insight into the factors influencing youth migration within the country.

Ethical standards were rigorously upheld throughout the research. All participants provided informed consent, were made aware of their rights to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions, and were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Data was anonymized and securely stored to ensure the privacy and protection of all information collected from the respondents. The model for the PLS-SEM is depicted pictorially below:
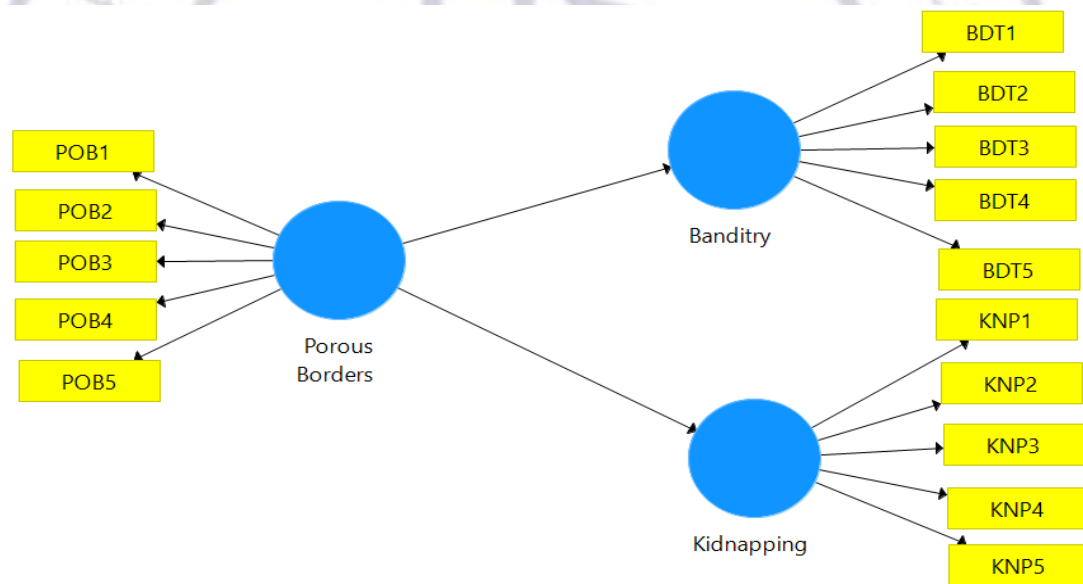


**Fig. 1:** Model Specification,
**Source: SmartPLS Output, 2025**

**Result and Discussion**

**Measurement Model Evaluation**

The measurement model was evaluated using convergent validity. Convergent validity is determined by examining the factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) (Gholami, et al, 2013). All the constructs used in this study has achieved the acceptable loadings of above 0.6; composite

reliability (CR) of all the constructs were all above 0.7 and Average variance extracted (AVE) were all above 0.5 as recommended by Hair et al. (2014). The above is shown in the fig. 2 and the table 1 below:
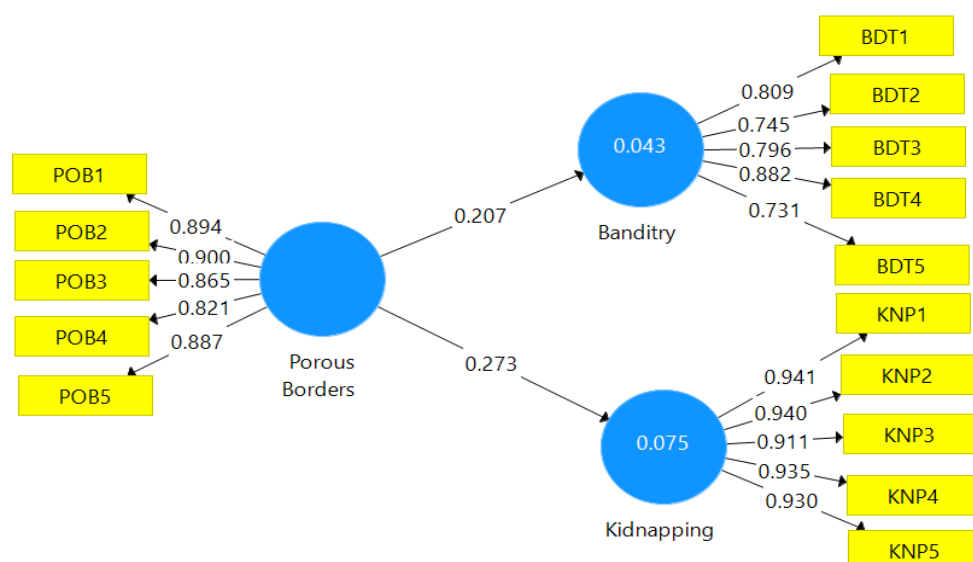


**Fig. 2: Measurement model of the study constructs and indicators.**
**Source: SmartPLS Output, 2025**

**Table 1: Convergent validity**

| Variables | Indicators | Loadings | Cronbach's alpha | rho_A | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Porous Boader | SPOB1 | 0.894 | 0.923 | 0.942 | 0.941 | 0.763 |
| | POB2 | 0.900 | | | | |
| | POB3 | 0.865 | | | | |
| | POB4 | 0.821 | | | | |
| | POB5 | 0.887 | | | | |
| Banditry | BDT1 | 0.809 | 0.855 | 0. 877 | 0.895 | 0.731 |
| | BDT2 | 0.745 | | | | |
| | BDT3 | 0.796 | | | | |
| | BDT4 | 0.882 | | | | |
| | BDT5 | 0.731 | | | | |
| Kidnapping | KNP1 | 0.941 | 0.962 | 0.967 | 0.970 | 0.867 |
| | KNP2 | 0.940 | | | | |
| | KNP3 | 0.911 | | | | |
| | KNP4 | 0.935 | | | | |
| | KNP5 | 0.930 | | | | |

**Source: SmartPLS Output,  2025**

The construct "Porous Border" shows strong convergent validity as indicated by high loadings of its indicators, ranging from 0.821 to 0.900, which suggests that all items are good measures of the construct.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for Porous Border is 0.763, well above the threshold of 0.5, confirming that a majority of the variance in the indicators is explained by the construct. This is supported by high Cronbach's alpha (0.923), rho_A (0.942), and Composite Reliability (0.941) scores, all exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.7 for reliability, indicating excellent internal consistency and reliability of the scale used to measure the Porous Border construct (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

For the Banditry construct, indicator loadings range from 0.731 to 0.882, suggesting that each indicator reliably measures the construct. The AVE is 0.731, indicating robust convergent validity as more than 70% of the variance in indicators is accounted for by the Banditry construct. The reliability metrics including Cronbach's alpha (0.855), rho_A (0.877), and Composite Reliability (0.895) are also above the acceptable thresholds, signifying strong internal consistency and reliability of the measures associated with the Banditry construct. This demonstrates that the indicators are consistent and reliable measures of Banditry within the context of the study (Hair et al., 2010).

The Kidnapping construct exhibits exceptionally high loadings for its indicators, ranging from 0.911 to 0.941, which strongly affirms that the indicators are excellent measures of the construct. With an AVE of 0.867, this construct exceeds the standard for convergent validity, indicating that a significant majority of the variance in the indicators is captured by the Kidnapping construct. Moreover, the construct's reliability is confirmed by exceptionally high values of Cronbach's alpha (0.962), rho_A (0.967), and Composite Reliability (0.970), all of which are well above the recommended thresholds, highlighting the indicators' reliability and the scale's robustness in measuring the Kidnapping construct accurately (Hair et al., 2010).
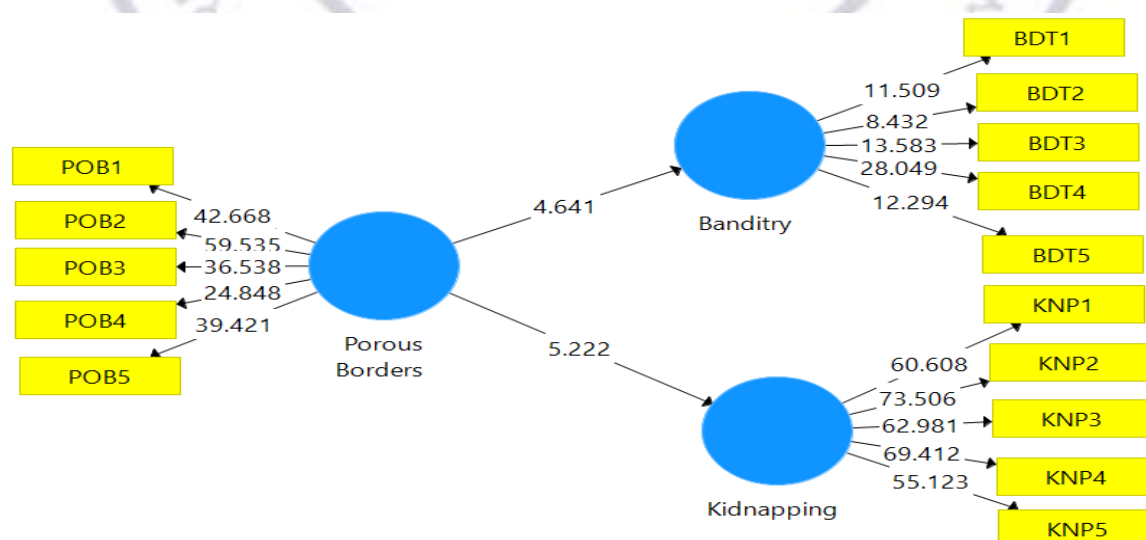
### Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing



**Fig. 3: Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing**

**Table 2** *Results of the Structural Model Analysis (Hypotheses Testing)*

| Hypotheses | Relationship | Beta (β) | Standard Error | T Statistics | P value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H$_{O1}$ | BOP->BDT | 0.207 | 0.045 | 4.641 | 0.000 | Rejected |
| H$_{O2}$ | BOP-> KNP | 0.273 | 0.052 | 5.222 | 0.000 | Rejected |

**Source: SmartPLS Output, 2025**

The Figure 3 and table 2 above show that standard beta and the corresponding t-values were used in assessing the structural model in this study. It was done through the bootstrapping procedure. The bootstrapping result from the Smart PLS reveals that path coefficient of porous border and banditry (BOP->BDT) is positive and statistically significant with a fairly beta (β) value of 0.207 (21%), t-value of 4.641 with its corresponding p-value of 0.000 (β-value = 0.207, t-value = 4.641 & p-value = 0.000). This result has not provided the basis for accepting the null hypothesis one of this study which state that porous border has no significant impact on banditry in North West, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. indicating a clear positive relationship between Porous Borders (BOP) and Banditry (BDT). The high T statistic far exceeds the critical value (usually around 1.96 for a 95% confidence level), confirming that as the porosity of borders increases, the level of banditry significantly increases as well. This finding substantiates the theory that weaker border controls are associated with higher incidences of banditry, reflecting the direct impact of border security on controlling unlawful activities such as banditry. This means that as border in North West, Nigeria continue to be porous, the cases on banditry also increases significantly. This finding underscores the challenges faced by North West Nigeria, where the lack of stringent border controls not only facilitates the movement of unlawful actors but also exacerbates the security situation by increasing banditry. As border controls remain inadequate, the region experiences heightened banditry incidents.

This finding is in line with the finding of Nsiegbe and Gabriel (2024). Their findings align closely with the current study, emphasizing that weak border controls facilitate the flow of arms and criminals, exacerbating banditry. Both studies underscore the direct relationship between porous borders and increased banditry in North West Nigeria. the finding is also in agreement with the finding of Idris (2021) who focused on border porosity and arms trafficking, and its finding supports the current findings by illustrating how porous borders contribute to national security threats, including banditry and kidnapping.

The hypothesis with respect to porous border and kidnapping (BOP->KNP) is positive and statistically significant with a fairly beta (β) value of 0.273 (27%), t-value of 5.222 with its corresponding p- value of

0.000 (β-value = 0.273, t-value = 5.222 & p-value = 0.000). This result has not provided the basis for accepting the null hypothesis two of this study which state that porous border has no significant impact on kidnapping in North West, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Also, indicating a clear positive relationship between Porous Borders (BOP) and Kidnapping (KNP). This result also rejects the null hypothesis $H_{O2}$, indicating a significant positive relationship between Porous Borders (BOP) and Kidnapping (KNP). The findings suggest that an increase in border porosity is strongly associated with an increase in kidnapping activities in North West, Nigeria. The high T statistic clearly surpasses the standard threshold, solidifying the evidence that porous borders facilitate conditions that are conducive to increased kidnapping incidents. This underscores that as borders remain inadequately monitored or controlled, they become more permeable to criminal elements who capitalize on these weaknesses to engage in kidnapping. This significant relationship points to porous borders as a critical risk factor contributing to the higher rates of kidnapping in the region.

This finding is in line with the finding of Moliki and Ajetunmobi (2024) who focused on the implications of inadequate border security on arms trafficking and its effects on regional insecurity corresponds closely with this study findings. Both studies suggest that porous borders significantly elevate security risks, including kidnapping. This finding also agree with the finding of Udosen and Uwak (2021) who in their analysis of the socio-economic effects of insurgency and banditry, attributing these issues to weak border control, supports your findings that porous borders facilitate conditions conducive to kidnapping.

**Tabe 4: R Square**

|  | R Square | R Square Adjusted |
|---|---|---|
| Banditry | 0.531 | 0.497 |
| Kidnapping | 0.750 | 0.720 |

**Source: SmartPLS Output, 2025**

The R Square values from Table 4 indicate the proportion of variance in the dependent variables (Banditry and Kidnapping) explained by the independent variable (porous border) in the model. For Banditry, the R Square value is 0.531, suggesting that 53.1% of the variability in banditry activities can be explained by the model's predictors, which is moderately substantial. The adjusted R Square, which accounts for the number of predictors used relative to the sample size, is slightly lower at 0.497, indicating that nearly 49.7% of the variance in banditry is explained after adjusting for model complexity. In contrast, Kidnapping has an R Square of 0.750, meaning that 75% of the variance in kidnapping incidents is accounted for by the model's predictors, showing a very strong model fit. The adjusted R Square for Kidnapping stands at 0.720, confirming that after adjusting for the number of variables, 72% of the variance is still accounted for, which underscores the strong predictive power of the model concerning kidnapping activities. These figures

demonstrate a robust model effectiveness, particularly in explaining kidnapping, while also providing substantial explanatory power for banditry within the context of the study.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study conclusively demonstrates that porous borders significantly contribute to increased instances of both banditry and kidnapping in North West Nigeria. The structural model analysis, supported by robust statistical evidence, indicates a clear and significant positive relationship between porous borders and the escalation of these criminal activities. With beta values of 0.207 and 0.273 for banditry and kidnapping respectively, and corresponding high T-values, the findings resoundingly reject the null hypotheses, affirming that weaker border controls are directly associated with higher incidences of both crimes. This underscores the urgent need for stringent border management and enhanced security measures in the region to curtail these activities. As the porosity of the borders facilitates the movement of unlawful actors, it exacerbates the security situation, increasing both banditry and kidnapping significantly. Thus, strengthening border controls is imperative to reducing these criminal incidences and enhancing the overall safety and stability of North West Nigeria.

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn from this study, the study recommends that:

i. Government should consider the deployment of more advanced surveillance technology such as drones and sensors along the border to monitor and control illegal crossings. Additionally, increasing the presence of security personnel and establishing more border control stations would help in mitigating unauthorized access. There should also be a focus on inter-agency collaboration, including intelligence sharing between border control, local police, and military forces to effectively respond to banditry threats. Implementing comprehensive training programs for border security agents on modern security and surveillance techniques will further strengthen the border's integrity. These measures will help curb the flow of illegal arms and criminals that contribute to the rising levels of banditry in the region.

ii. Government should adopt a multifaceted approach to border management. This should include the establishment of more thorough identity checks and the use of biometric systems at all entry points to prevent kidnappers from crossing the border undetected. Strengthening the legal framework surrounding border security with harsher penalties for smuggling and kidnapping can act as a deterrent. Additionally, fostering regional cooperation with neighboring countries to manage cross-border criminal activities could be instrumental in reducing kidnapping incidents. Establishing a dedicated task force that specializes in anti-kidnapping and human trafficking operations along the borders could also prove effective in directly addressing this issue, ensuring a safer environment for the communities in North West Nigeria.

### References

Adegboye, A., & Dube, S. (2024). The facilitation of arms smuggling through porous borders: A structural functionalism approach. *Journal of Conflict and Arms Management*, 7(2), 112-128.

Ajetunmobi, B. O., & Odekoya, A. O. (2024). Border security and arms trafficking in Nigeria: An assessment of banditry and kidnapping in North West. *Journal of Political Discourse, 2*(3), 111-113

Duke, O. O., Okon, B., & Associates (2023). Porous borders, banditry, and insecurity in Northern Nigeria: A human security perspective in the country's Fourth Republic. *Journal of Security and Territorial Studies*, 12(1), 31-50.

Egwu, S. (2016). Understanding the nuances of bandit activities in agrarian communities. *Journal of Rural Security Studies*, 12(2), 34-46.

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Hair, J. F., Henseler, J., & Sarstedt, M. (2021). Advanced issues in partial least squares structural equation modeling. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hamisu, S., & Turner, L. (2023). Porous borders and the proliferation of criminal activities in Nigeria's North West. *Journal of Transnational Crime Prevention*, 18(2), 142-158.

Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43(1), 115-135. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8

Idris, A. (2024). ECOWAS protocol on free movement and its impact on trans-border banditry at the Nigeria-Niger frontier. *Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development*, 3(1), 1-20.

Johnson, F., & Mbeki, T. (2023). The rise of organized crime in Africa: A focus on kidnapping and banditry. *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, 17(1), 88-106.

Lawal, P., & Musa, A. (2025). Border security challenges in North West Nigeria and their impact on regional stability. *Journal of African Border Studies*, 12(3), 200-218.

Moliki, J., & Ajetunmobi, O. (2024). Security implications of inadequate border management in Nigeria's Northwest. *Security and Crime Science Journal*, 19(3), 234-251.

Muritala, T., & Ajetunmobi, O. (2019). Research methodology with a step-by-step guide for beginners. *Journal of Applied Statistics*, 46(8), 1528-1542.

Nsiegbe, G., & Gabriel, T. (2024). Porous borders and banditry in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management Research*, 10(10), 230-250.

Ode, A. O.. (2024). Socio-economic impacts of insurgency and the challenges of border management in Nigeria. *Wukari International Studies Journal*, 8(5), 85-102.

Okeke, I., & Adekoya, R. (2024). The dynamics of kidnapping and banditry in Nigeria: Trends and countermeasures. *Nigerian Journal of Security Studies*, 20(4), 234-250.

Onuoha, F. C. (2023). Small arms proliferation and human security in Africa: An analysis of porous borders. *African Centre for Strategic Studies Journal*, 16(4), 400-420.

Rosenje, M. O., & Adeniyi, O. P. (2024). The impact of banditry on Nigeria's security in the Fourth Republic: An evaluation of Nigeria's Northwest. *Journal of African Security Studies*, 34(2), 45-65.

Rufus, A. I., & Ogbe, E. B. (2025). The rise of banditry in Northwest Nigeria: Examining the security implications and pathways to stability. *Kashere Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 3(1), 22-40.

Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Hair, J. F. (2022). Partial least squares structural equation modeling. In *Handbook of Market Research*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-05542-8_15-1

Singh, A., & Masuku, M. B. (2014). Sampling techniques & determination of sample size in applied statistics research: An overview. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 2(11), 1-22.

Smith, J., & Green, A. (2022). Global perspectives on kidnapping and banditry: Economic and social implications. *Journal of International Security Affairs*, 39(2), 112-130.

Uche, J., & Iwuamadi, K. C. (2018). The escalation of banditry and its implications for national security in Nigeria. *Journal of Conflict and Security Law*, 23(1), 89-104.

Uwakwe, H., Attah, F., & Raheem, D. (2023). Cross-border armed banditry and its impact on Nigeria's national security: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of African Security Review*, 32(1), 45-64.

Yakubu, V., Godwin, V., Gaya, F., & David, A. (2021). An analysis of the factors influencing kidnapping in Shendam Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria. *Gusau International Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 4(2), 249-258.