



Insecurity, Unemployment and the Quest for Peace in Nigeria: Evidence from Asymmetric Cointegration Approach



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Abstract: *Since the return of the country to democratic rule on 29th May, 1999, the people of Nigeria have often hoped that democracy could guarantee freedom, liberty, and equity, and, enhance the security of lives and properties which are the prerequisites for the much-needed sustainable economic growth and development of a nation. If this is achieved, the society would be geared towards economic abundance, social prosperity and peaceful coexistence. This paper has within the framework of a nonlinear autoregressive distributed lag model (NARDL) examined the relationship between insecurity and unemployment in Nigeria. The results have revealed evidence of nonlinear relationship between the two variables. In a nutshell, the variables have been found to have a positive short and long asymmetric relationship. Put another way, an increase in unemployment induces an increase in the insecurity rate ceteris paribus. Based on these results, the paper recommends the Nigerian government should pay more attention to careful re-modeling of the economy in a dexterous way through working hand in hand with experts in Economics to ensure attainment of higher output and improved economic growth. This would lessen the prevalent high rate of unemployment in the country, and would help the government reduce the rising spate of insecurity which poses a potential threat to peaceful coexistence of the Nigerian populace.*

Keyword: Insecurity, Unemployment, Asymmetric Cointegration

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Introduction

In Economics, unemployment is the number of people who do not have a job but are looking for one. The main reason why Economists care or put another way worry about unemployment is because of its direct effect on the welfare of the unemployed (Blanchard, 2006). The attainment of full employment in an economy is what ensures optimal utilization of the scarce resources. Therefore, full employment is one of the key macroeconomic objectives of any country around the globe. Most of the developing countries like Nigeria, are bedeviled with high level of unemployment which often tends to have a multiplier effect on the national security. Nigeria is presently experiencing high level of unemployment, which has significantly contributed to a higher level of poverty, whose effects and consequences have contributed to higher insecurity cases particularly in recent years (Adenike, 2021). Akande and Okuwa (2009) have pointed out that unemployment is captured by the growing number of

unemployed youths that roam the streets. It is also seen in the informal sector of the economy as under-employment, declining real wages, reduced incentives, reduced private investment across sectors of the nation's economy and, reduction in the quality of education and training given to the citizens in tertiary educational institutions (Akwara et al, 2013). Adebayo, (1999) as cited in Akwara et al. (2013), posits that unemployment becomes an existential crisis when the labor force wishes to work but cannot get a job. In Nigeria today, the rapid increase in the country's unemployment rate has become a major source of worry. Every day, the teeming populace in Nigeria, either finds it difficult to secure an employment or is unavoidably laid off its work for one reason or the other. As distinct from developed countries that have a well-organized, comprehensive and sophisticated security system which operates in tandem with modern advanced technology, Nigeria battles with poor social security system which cannot cater for most of the needs of the people. Nevertheless, it is quite worrisome that in Nigeria, the unemployed do not receive unemployment benefits from the government, most, if not all, are unable to afford decent food, clothing, shelter, and recreation. Many have thus resorted to engaging in activities that constitute security challenges and threat to the nation (Adegoke, 2015). According to Okafor (2011), unemployment in Nigeria is with attendant social, economic, political and psychological consequences. One of its social consequences on Nigerian youths is the high level of youth unemployment. In Nigeria, there exists a phenomenal increase in the number of street youths and urban urchins/miscreants (area boys) which continually grows up and culminates into a greater crisis for the polity.

Since the return of the country to democratic rule on 29th May, 1999, the people of Nigeria have often hoped that democracy could guarantee freedom, liberty, and equity, and, enhance the security of lives and properties which are the prerequisites for the much-needed sustainable economic growth and development of a nation. Nearly eighteen years thereafter, the hopes of Nigerians were dashed, their dreams deluged with disappointments, their confidence in the government as an apparatus for providing security for peaceful coexistence was eroded and their optimism became a mirage or put another way an ominous pessimism. According to figures from the National Bureau of Statistics, over ten million Nigerians were unemployed as of March 2009. As Otto and Ukpere, (2012) observed, the figure on unemployment kept increasing geometrically yearly with less realistic effort by the managers of the state to abate the rampaging unemployment problem which unequivocally has multiplier effects on national security and hence, social coexistence of the people. To this end, the aim of this paper is to examine the asymmetric long run link between insecurity and unemployment in Nigeria.

Literature Review:

Conceptual Literature

Concept of Unemployment

Unemployment, as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) (1982), refers to numbers of the economically active population who are without work, but available for and seeking a job, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work. According to Adebayo, (1999) as cited in Akwara et al. (2013), contends that unemployment exists when a person wishes to work but cannot find a job. In Nigeria today, the rapid increase in the country's unemployment rate has become a major source of worry. A multitude of graduates from the universities (federal and state), polytechnics, state and federal colleges of education, secondary school leavers to mention a few, either find it strenuously difficult to secure jobs, or, are accidentally or voluntarily laid off their works for one circumstantial reason or the other. It is no longer about going to school and graduating or learning how to trade, or even acquiring any skills of whatever purpose but it is about how to face the reality of graduating and joining the brigade of the unemployed with little hope of

what the future unfolds. Unlike what is obtainable in most developed countries, in Nigeria, there is not comprehensive social security system properly put in place to cater for the unemployed. The security architecture in Nigeria is so unorganized, obsolete and primitive. Thus, as the unemployed do not receive any unemployment benefits from the government, most, if not all, are unable to afford decent food, clothing, shelter, and recreation. Consequently, the unemployed resolves to resort to various forms of social vices which eventually become catalyst for insecurity and hence a daunting challenge that constitutes security challenges to the nation (Adegoke, 2015). According to Okafor (2011), unemployment in Nigeria is with attendant social, economic, political and psychological consequences. One of its social consequences on Nigerian youths is the high level of youth unemployment.

Concept of Insecurity

Security could take different forms. There is human security, national security, and so on. Therefore, to be able to define national insecurity, it is pertinent to have an understanding of what national security and human security are. National security implies the appropriation and development of state apparatus of coercive force to deal with the situation of crisis, nationally or internationally. Human security, on the other hand, involves protecting people from hunger, disease, natural disasters, poverty, and unemployment. Analysts have argued that it is human security that provides the most effective instrument for national security rather than the building of arms and weapons of warfare (Hay, 1995; Osawe, 2015). One of the principal functions of the modern state is that of protecting the territorial integrity of the state, lives, and properties of its citizens and upliftment of the human condition. The promotion of human security has become the central focus of the new development paradigm because the building of arms and ammunitions does not bring about peace, security, and political stability. Eradicating poverty, hunger, diseases through sustainable development programs, holds the key to enduring national security. Thus, a country that invests heavily in human security may not have to spend much money and effort in fighting crimes like kidnapping, human trafficking, bombing, youth unrest, and political assassination (Ighodalo, 2012). Therefore, the first duty of a government is to keep its citizenry safe because like Nwagboso (2012) observed, only the state has the wherewithal to guarantee security and safer coexistence and, salvage the society from anarchy. Conversely, national insecurity is the exact opposite of national security and human security and has attracted such common descriptors as want of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, lack of confidence, state of doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, instability, trouble, lack of protection and feeling unsafe (Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro, 2013).

Theoretical Literature

The social conflict theory serves as the theoretical underpinning / hub of this paper, as it draws attention to class differentiation and the misery of the working class. It is a synthesis of the German philosophy, the English political economy and the French socialism, intrinsically built on the idea of historical and dialectical materialism – class struggle and the classless proletarian society. According to the proponents of this theory, the theory provides theoretical explanation for competition among social classes, state actors and non-state actors in their attempt to protect their selfish interests. This class struggle leads to the acquisition of weapons and ammunitions for self-preservation thus leading to social conflicts and threats to the national security and sustainable economic development (Adebakin and Raimi, 2012). This is commensurate with the findings of Marx and Engel (1976) who assert that the history of the hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. The political elite is constantly in struggle to control both the political spheres and the economic resources of the state, while the poor remains in continuous struggle to earn a living. In addition to this is the clash of interest that exists between the police and armed robbers, ruling party and the opposition,

majority and minority ethnic groups, one religion versus others et cetera. This justifies the existence of social conflict in human societies of nowadays. The emergence of political institutions, economic organs, legal institutions, traditional institutions et cetera, as forms of social structure, or, as products which are created as a result of conflicts between groups with conflicting ideological interest with the sole aim of controlling the resources of the society. The social conflict theory sees threat to security as motivated by the struggle among rival social classes or groups in their quest for group economic interests, relevance and political dominance. In the words of Adebakin and Raimi, (2012), the content of social conflict theory is that, in a dysfunctional society where exploitation of one class / group by the other, termed as a dominant group the results manifest themselves as armed struggle and full scale warfare. This situation is capable of eroding the developmental effort of the people. In colloquial terms, peace is a panacea for economic development in any society.

Empirical Literature

Several empirical studies have investigated the relationship between macroeconomic variables and insecurity around the globe. For example, Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) established that security provides the opportunity for development of a nation. Ewetan and Urhie (2014) revealed that insecurity hinders business activities and discourages foreign and local investors from accessing economic potentials. Adegbami (2013) in his study opines that insecurity is detrimental to general well-being of the people, and has led to destruction of businesses and properties, and relocation of industries. Udeh and Ihezue (2013) revealed that insecurity poses a potential challenge for Nigeria's effort towards national economic development. Gaibullov and Sandler (2009) noted that terrorism (transnational terrorist attacks) had a significant growth-limiting effects and that terrorist incidents per million persons have reduced the growth of gross domestic product per capita by 1.5% in Asia. On the other hand, terrorism increases risk and uncertainty which limits investment and hinders foreign direct investment (Abadie and Gardeazabal, 2008). Terrorism affects industries such as airlines, tourism, manufacturing companies, and the export sector, which can in consequence reduce gross domestic product and growth (Enders and Sandler, 2006).

Blomberg, Hess and Orphanides (2004) have carried out a study on 177 countries from 1968 to 2000 (pooled cross section data). The panel estimates showed that terrorism has a small effect on per capita income growth for all samples, and it reduces investment. Tavaris (2004) have conducted another study on the cost of terrorism, using sample size from 1987 to 2001. The results showed that terrorism had a significant but negative impact on GDP growth. Gupta et al (2004) studied the impact of armed conflict and terrorism on macroeconomic variables, using a sample size of 66 low and middle income countries. It was observed that conflict indirectly reduces economic growth by increasing the defense spending share of government expenditure.

Eckstein and Tsiddon (2004) investigated the effect of terrorism on the macro economy of Israel, using quarterly data from 1980 to 2003, applying vector autoregression (VAR), the result showed that terrorism has a significant negative impact on per capita GDP, investment and exports. Gaibullov and Sandler (2009) in their study titled "the impact of terrorism and conflicts on growth in Asia 1070-2004" observed that transnational terrorism attacks had a significant growth-limiting effect and reduced growth by crowding-in government expenditures. Achumba, et. al (2013) in their study titled "insecurity in Nigeria and its implication for business investment and sustainable development" indicated that insecurity challenges in the country are enormous and complex and would continue to remain if left unchecked.

Otto and Ukpere (2012) carried out a study on national security and development in Nigeria. They found that there is a positive relationship between security and development, as insecurity had been found to have a debilitating effect on economic development of many less developed economies. Sandler and Ender (2008) concluded that ‘given the low intensity of most terrorist campaigns, the economic consequences of terrorism are generally very modest and short-lived. The economic influence of terrorism is anticipated to surface in specific sectors that face an enhanced terrorism risk, such as the tourist industry or FDI. From the literature so far reviewed it has been carefully observed by the Authors of this paper that no study has sought to investigate the relationship between insecurity and unemployment around the globe. On this basis, the paper aims to examine the asymmetric short and long run link between insecurity and unemployment in Nigeria from 1986 to 2021.

Methodology

This section of the paper begins with the conduct of preliminary tests and is usually conducted prior to any model estimation exercise. The pre-estimation tests carried out in the paper are the BDS test for nonlinearity and the unit root test with breaks.

Data Sources

The data for this study was mainly secondary types sourced from World Development Indicators (2021) and World Governance Indicators (2021) for the period of 1986 to 2021. The rationale for obtaining from these sources are because of the availability of these data from these sources. The data were Insecurity (INS) proxy by Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism: Percentile Rank and unemployment level, measured by Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate) sourced from world governance indicators while data on unemployment was sourced from World development indicators.

Model Specification

The model of this paper is specified in its functional form as:

$$INS = f(UN) \tag{3.1}$$

The econometric form of the model is specified as:

$$INS_t = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 UN_t + \varepsilon_t \tag{3.2}$$

Where INS is insecurity proxy by Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism: Percentile Rank, UN is unemployment level measured by Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate), α is the intercept, β is the parameter and ε is the error term. The a prior expectation of the parameter (β)>0

Techniques of Data Analysis

The BDS test for nonlinearity

Brock, Dechert, Scheikman and Lebaron (1996) have developed a test for testing linear independence in time series. Specifically, the test is portmanteau test for time-based dependence in a series. It can be used for testing against a variety of possible deviations from independence, including linear dependence, nonlinear dependence or chaos. It is shown in Brock *et al.*(1996) that $(\sqrt{n - m + 1}) \frac{b_{m,n}(\epsilon)}{\delta_{m,n}(\epsilon)} \rightarrow N(0,1)$

Where $\sigma_{m,n}^2(t) = 4(k^m + 2 \sum_{j=1}^{m-1} k^{m-j} c_1^{2j} + (m - 1)^2 c_1^{2m} - m^2 k c_1^{2m-2}$

Here, c_1 can be estimated using $c_{1,n}$. The k is the probability of any triplet of points lying within (ϵ) of each other, and is estimated by counting the number of sets satisfying the sample condition:

$$k_n(\epsilon) = \frac{2}{n(n-1)(n-2)} \sum_{t=1}^n \sum_{s=t+1}^n \sum_{r=s+1}^n \tag{3.3}$$

The hypothesis is that H_0 : the series follows linear dependence

H_1 : the series follows nonlinear dependence

The ADF unit root tests with break

The mathematical equations for the above unit root tests with break are:

$$\hat{y}_t^* = \sum_{i=0}^k \omega_i D_{t-i}(T_b) + \alpha \hat{y}_{t-1}^* + \sum_{i=1}^k c_i \Delta \hat{y}_{t-1}^* + u_t \tag{3.4}$$

$$\hat{y}_{t=\alpha y_{t-1}}^* + \sum_{i=1}^k c_i \Delta \hat{y}_{t-1}^* + u_t \tag{3.5}$$

In these tests, the t-statistic is used in comparing $\hat{\alpha}$ to 1, $t_{\hat{\alpha}}$, with a view to evaluating the null hypothesis. It is noteworthy that the equations represent standard augmented Dickey Fuller test with the addition of $k+1$ break dummy variables $D_{t-i}(T_b)$. The hypotheses are the same as those in an ADF test without breaks i.e,

$H_0 : \delta = \rho = 0$ (The series has a unit root with no time trend.)

$H_1 : \delta \neq 0; \rho < 0$ (The series is stationary with a deterministic trend.)

Nonlinear Autoregressive Distributed Lag (NARDL) Model

The classical ARDL framework assumes that the long run relationship between / among any variables is a symmetric linear combination of regressors. While this is a natural classical econometric starting point, it does not however commensurate with the conventional finance and economics literature approach to modeling and estimating nonlinearities / asymmetries in economic relationships (Kahneman, Tversky and Shiller.1979). In connection with this, Shin et al (2014) proposes a nonlinear ARDL (NARDL) framework in which short and long run nonlinearities are modeled as positive and negative partial sum decompositions of the regressors. The mathematical specification of a typical NARDL model with two variables can be given in equation 3.6 as:

$$INS_t = \sum_{j=1}^p \psi_j INS_{t-j} + \sum_{r=1}^k \sum_{j=0}^p (\beta_r^0 x_r^0 + \beta_{r,j}^+ UN_{r,t-j}^+ + \beta_{r,j}^- UN_{r,t-j}^-) + \sum_{s=1}^m \alpha_s d_{s,t} + \varepsilon_t \tag{3.6}$$

Where β_r^0 are coefficients for the initial conditions, and $\beta_{r,j}^+$ and $\beta_{r,j}^-$ are coefficients associated with the asymmetric distributed lag variables. The conditional error correction form of the above equation (3.6) is thus:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta INS_t = & -\phi INS_{t-1} \\ & + \sum_{r=0}^k (\lambda_r^+ UN_{r,t-1}^+ + \lambda_r^- UN_{r,t-1}^-) + \sum_{j=1}^{p-1} \gamma_j \Delta INS_{t-j} \\ & + \sum_{r=1}^k (\eta_r^+ \Delta UN_{r,t}^+ + \eta_r^- \Delta UN_{r,t}^-) \\ & + \sum_{r=1}^k \sum_{j=1}^{p_{r-1}} (\delta_{r,j}^+ \Delta UN_{r,t-j} + \delta_{r,j}^- \Delta UN_{r,t-j}) + \sum_{s=1}^m \alpha_s d_{s,t} + \varepsilon_t \end{aligned} \tag{3.7}$$

Where the $\lambda_r^+, \lambda_r^-, \eta_r^+, \eta_r^-, \delta_{r,j}^+, \delta_{r,j}^-$ are the asymmetric coefficients, and ϕ is the error correction parameter respectively.

Results and Discussion

Nonlinearity Test

Conventionally, the natural start point of any time series in data analysis is the examination of linearity or other wise of the series, and non-stationarity so as to be properly guided while carrying out the estimation of the underlying model. Table 4.1 presents the nonlinearity test using Brock-Dechert-Scheinkman (1996) nonlinearity test. The results reveal that the variables are nonlinear (follow nonlinear dependence) which validates the use of nonlinear model in estimating the relationship between insecurity and unemployment in Nigeria.

Table 4.1 *BDS Nonlinearity Test*

ariables	Dimension	BDS Statistic	Std. Error	z-Statistic	Prob.
INS	2	0.135553	0.012339	10.98603	0.0000*
UN	2	0.141041	0.026592	5.303839	0.0000*

Source: Researchers' computation (2023)

Unit Root with Break Test

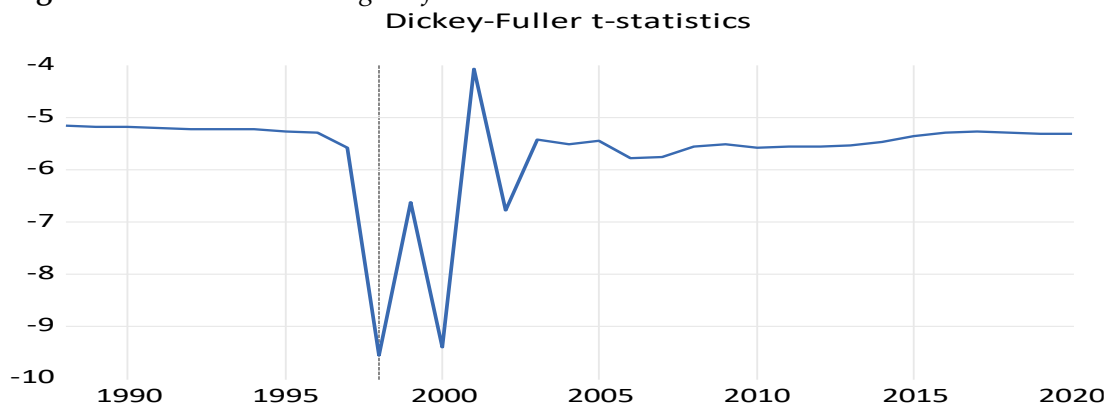
Since the series are nonlinear, the ADF unit root test with break at level and at first difference with trend and intercept was carried out in order to locate appropriate break date in the series and to improve the robustness of the results given the low statistical power of standard unit root tests that do not accommodate breaks. The results in table 4.2 reveal that the variables are not stationary at level but rather stationary at first difference with an evidence of break occurring in the year 1998 for insecurity, and, 2015 for unemployment respectively.

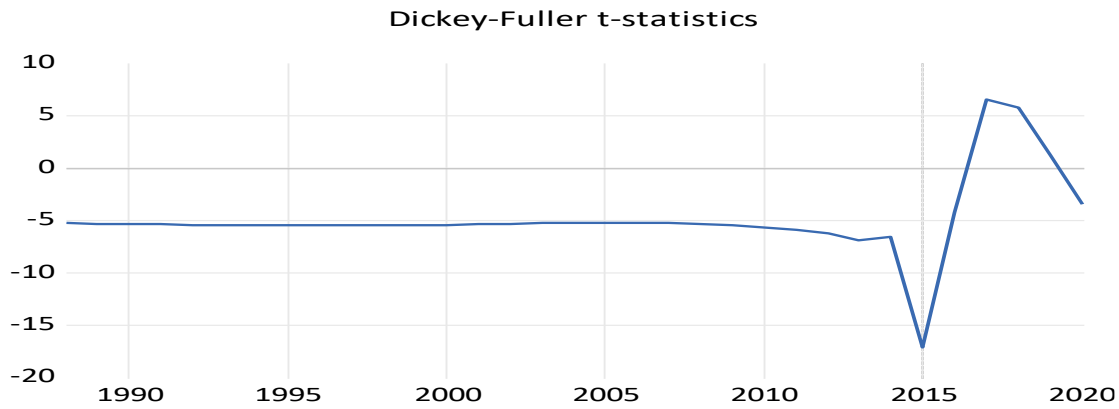
Table 4.2 *ADF Unit Root wit Break*

Variables	ADF Unit Root Test with Break at Level		Break Time
	T statistic	Probability	
INS	-3.82822	0.1549	1999
UN	-1.848453	0.6593	2015
ADF Unit Root Test with Break at First Difference			
INS	-9.576056	< 0.01	1998
UN	-17.17309	< 0.01	2015

Source: Researchers' Computation (2023)

Figure 4.1: *ADF-test showing the first break dates*





Source: Researcher’s depiction (2023)

Model Estimation

The results of BDS nonlinearity test justify the use of NARDL model as proposed by Shin et al. (2014) to explore the nonlinear / asymmetric link between the two variables. The results of NARDL regression are reported in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Symmetry Tests

Null hypothesis: Coefficient is Symmetric			
Variable	Statistic	Value	Probability
Long-run			
INS	F-statistic	6.815118	0.0151**
	Chi-square	6.815118	0.0090*
Short-run			
INS	F-statistic	4.688262	0.0401**
	Chi-square	4.688262	0.0304**
Joint (Long-Run and Short-Run)			
INS	F-statistic	3.430852	0.0482**
	Chi-square	6.861704	0.0324**

Note: * & ** show statistical at 1% and 5% level of significant

Source: Researchers’ computation 2023

The results obtained in table 4.3, reveal clearly evidence of asymmetric short run and long run link between the two variables where a higher insecurity rate induces a higher unemployment rate in Nigeria.

Lastly, the paper uses the derived multiplier dynamic adjustments graphs to depict, examine and analyze cumulative dynamic multiplier for the two variables. The graphs named as Figure 2, indicates that there exists a positive association between insecurity and unemployment in Nigeria as any shock to insecurity in Nigeria accounts for a positive response to unemployment. Put another way, Figure 4.2 below shows the cumulative sum of a dynamic multiplier effect of insecurity on unemployment at each point in time over the sample period. It is worth noting that the cumulative dynamic multipliers (CDMs), for an NARDL model, are derived for any long run asymmetric distributed lag variables using the partial derivatives for both the positive and negative partial sum regressors and it is reported in figure 4.2 as

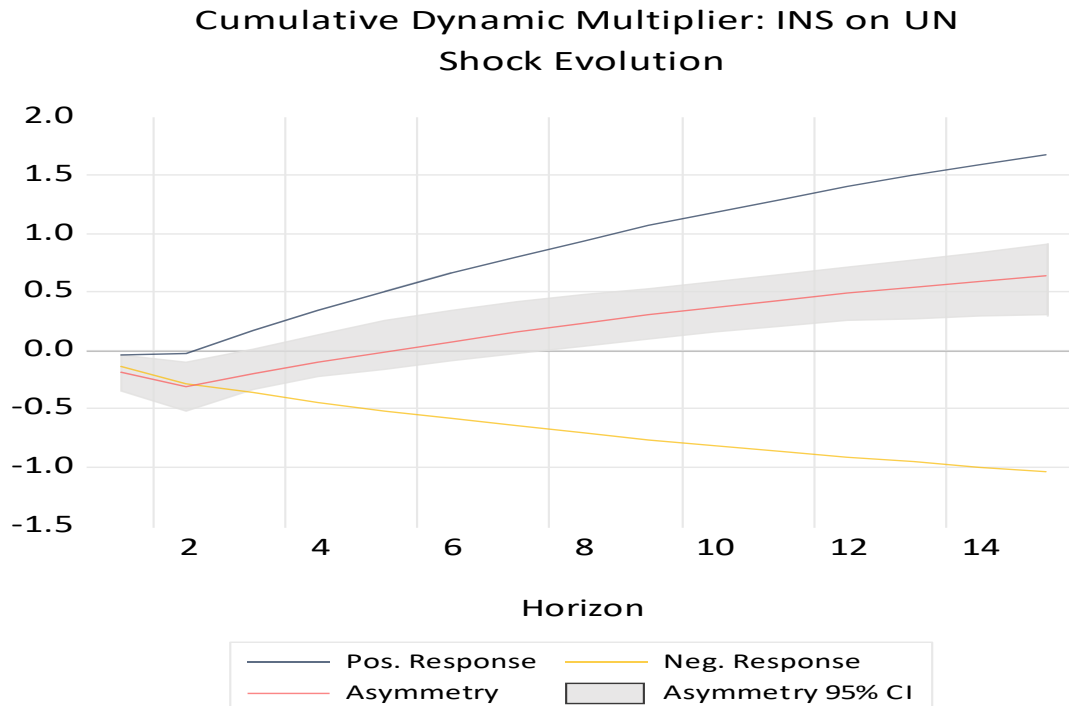


Figure 4.2: Cumulative dynamic multiplier effect of insecurity (INS) on unemployment (UN)
 Source: Researchers' computation (2023)

Diagnostic Tests

To determine the appropriateness and adequacy of the NARDL model, the paper conducts some diagnostic tests. The results from Table 4.4 reveal that the residuals of the NARDL model are homoscedastic and that they are not serially correlated. However, the CUSUM test for dynamic stability of the model as depicted in Figure 4.3, shows that the model is dynamically stable, hence both the short and long run relationship between the variables can be considered stable over the sample period. Therefore, these results indicate that the model is statistically adequate.

Table 4.4 Heteroskedasticity and Serial correlation Tests

Diagnostics Check	F- STATISTIC	Prob.	Null Hypotheses
Harvey Heteroskedasticity Test	1.119266	0.3843	No Heteroskedasticity
Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test	0.031538	0.969	No Serial correlation

Source: Researchers' Computation (2023)

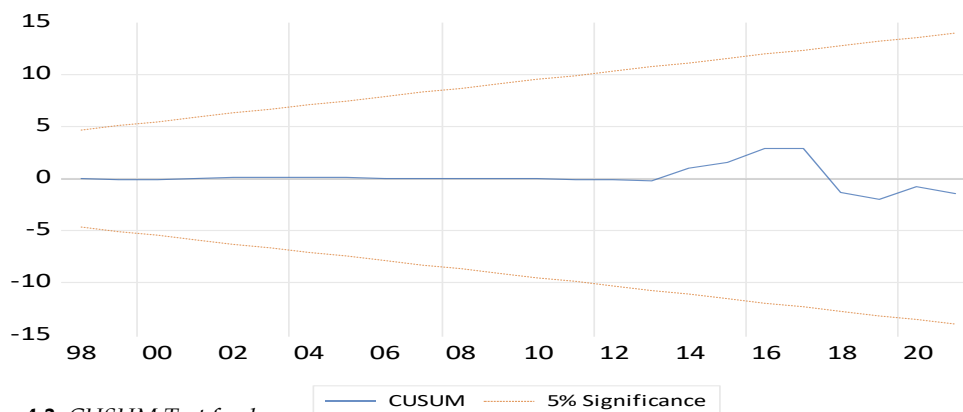


Figure 4.3: CUSUM Test for dynamic stability
 Source: Researchers' computation (2023)

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

This study examined the asymmetric relationship between insecurity and unemployment in Nigeria from 1986 to 2021 using the Nonlinear Autoregressive Distributed Lag (NARDL) model. The empirical results demonstrate that insecurity and unemployment share a significant positive asymmetric relationship in both the short run and long run. These findings indicate that increases and decreases in insecurity exert different impacts on unemployment, highlighting the nonlinear and complex interactions between the variables. The study thus affirms that insecurity is not only a social or political concern but also an economic factor capable of influencing labor market performance and overall macroeconomic stability. Given these findings, it is evident that insecurity and unemployment reinforce each other in a cyclical manner: heightened insecurity weakens investment and productivity, thereby increasing unemployment, while persistent unemployment can intensify insecurity through heightened social frustration, poverty, and vulnerability to criminal activities. This dynamic underscores the need for policy interventions that are multidimensional and responsive to the asymmetric nature of the relationship identified in this study.

In line with the empirical finding, the study recommends that the Nigerian government prioritize comprehensive strategies to address the rising level of insecurity. These strategies should include strengthening security institutions, improving intelligence gathering, and investing in modern security infrastructure. However, security-focused measures alone are insufficient. The government must also implement broad-based economic reforms aimed at stimulating productive activities, promoting industrialization, and enhancing economic resilience. A deliberate remodeling of the economy (particularly through support for job-creating sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services) will help increase output and foster inclusive growth.

Furthermore, targeted policies aimed at reducing unemployment are critical. Initiatives such as vocational training, youth empowerment programs, entrepreneurship support, and the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can significantly improve labor market outcomes. By creating sustainable employment opportunities, the government can reduce the economic conditions that fuel insecurity, thereby breaking the cycle between the two variables.

These recommendations are consistent with the study's findings and emphasize the need for an integrated approach that simultaneously addresses insecurity and unemployment. Such a coordinated policy framework is essential for achieving long-term peace, economic stability, and sustainable development in Nigeria.

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