

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ENERGY CHALLENGES AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

Jibrin OTUNBA,

Political Science Department, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Abuja, Nigeria

Otunbainfo@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examined Political Economy of Energy Challenges and National Security in Nigeria. The objectives of the study is to examine how the political economy of Nigeria's energy sector shaped the persistence of energy challenges in the country and to analyze the extent to which energy insecurity contributes to national security in Nigeria. It employed Marxist theory as the theory as the theoretical framework. Both primary and secondary data was used in the study. The findings showed that corruption, elite control, rent dependence, and policy inconsistencies significantly sustain Nigeria's energy challenges. Also, that energy insecurity directly fuels national security threats in Nigeria. It recommends that Federal Ministry of Power and NERC should strengthen regulatory enforcement by ensuring transparency in tariff structures, curbing corruption, and mandating accountability frameworks that attract long-term investment in infrastructure. Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), in collaboration with the Navy, should intensify protection of pipelines and energy infrastructure through community-based surveillance to reduce oil theft and vandalism.

Keywords: *Political Economy, Energy Challenges, Energy Security, Energy Sector, National Security.*

DOI: 10.31039/bjir.v2i8.72

1. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's energy landscape is shaped by a paradox: abundant hydrocarbon resources alongside chronic domestic energy shortfalls. Decades of oil and gas dependence turned the state into a rentier economy where public finances and politics revolve around petroleum rents. That reliance on oil and gas led to strong reasons for the government to focus on making money from exports instead of improving local energy systems, resulting in weak and disorganized power generation, transmission, and distribution. The World Bank and related assessments show that unreliable and inaccessible electricity remains a binding constraint on growth: millions lack access, installed capacity is underused, tariffs have historically been too low to

sustain operations, and chronic losses and debt have hollowed sector firms(Zhang, Shi, Zhang, & Xiao, 2019).

Poorly maintained infrastructure and governance gaps interact with dynamics of scarcity and inequality to produce security risks. In the Niger Delta, pipeline vandalism, crude theft (“bunkering”), and sabotage are not merely criminal acts for profit; they are embedded in local political economies where actors from petty thieves to well-armed syndicates capture flows of oil and gas, fuel violence, and erode state authority. Studies and field reports link illegal bunkering to organized networks that finance militancy, corrupt local elites, and undermine state control over critical energy assets. The result is lost revenue, environmental devastation, and intensified conflict risk(Madouni, 2025).

Gas flaring and the failure to commercialize associated gas illuminate another political-economic pathology: where infrastructure and regulatory capacity lag, the state and firms burn off valuable gas rather than capture it for domestic power or export, wasting potential energy and aggravating local grievances from pollution. Global tracking shows Nigeria has been among the countries with historically large volumes of flared gas, reflecting weak enforcement, underinvestment in gas-capture infrastructure, and misaligned incentives. These environmental harms translate into social discontent that feeds insecurity and constrains local development.

Macroeconomic policy choices, most visibly the removal of fuel subsidies, have direct security consequences. Subsidy regimes created large rents that sustained patronage networks and informal cross-border fuel markets; their abrupt removal has sometimes provoked protests, price shocks, and short-term disruptions that opportunistic armed groups exploit to deepen instability. Coverage of Nigeria’s subsidy reforms and their social fallout shows how energy pricing politics intersect with popular tensions and illicit markets(Sovacool, 2017).

Insurgent violence and organized crime further threaten energy systems. Insurgencies in the north (e.g., Boko Haram/ISWAP) and criminality in the south both attack infrastructure, displace populations, and disrupt production chains effects that feed back into economic decline and governance fragility. Scholars and security analysts highlight how governance vacuums allow violent actors to instrumentalize energy grievances, extract resources, and challenge state control.

Finally, recent market and technological shifts are reshaping responses. As grid power remains unreliable, households and firms increasingly adopt decentralized solutions (diesel generators,

rooftop solar, mini-grids), altering energy politics and creating new actors and markets. International partners and domestic reforms aim to stabilize tariffs, reduce flaring, and attract investment, but progress depends on reducing corruption, investing in transmission, and aligning fiscal incentives toward domestic energy access (Aguero, Takayesu, Novosel, & Masiello, 2017).

Objective of the study

- a. To examine how the political economy of Nigeria's energy sector shaped the persistence of energy challenges in the country.
- b. To analyze the extent to which energy insecurity contributes to national security in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's vast oil and gas resources have not translated into stable domestic energy supply, largely due to the political economy of rentier dependence, weak institutions, and entrenched subsidy regimes. Decades of prioritizing export revenue over infrastructure investment have left the power sector inefficient, with frequent blackouts and high operating costs for businesses and households (Nwaka, 2024). Corruption, policy inconsistency, and sabotage in oil-producing regions exacerbate the crisis, undermining energy security and sustainable development (Kashi, & Watts, 2008). Consequently, persistent energy challenges continue to threaten economic growth, deepen inequality, and fuel national insecurity.

Energy insecurity in Nigeria has become a critical driver of national security threats. Frequent power outages, oil theft, and gas flaring undermine economic stability, create unemployment, and heighten public grievances. In the Niger Delta, oil bunkering and pipeline vandalism fuel militancy and organized crime, while in the north, energy poverty reinforces conditions that extremist groups exploit for recruitment (Omorogbe & Ordor, 2018). Weak governance and poor regulation of the energy sector exacerbate these challenges, limiting state capacity to provide security and development. Thus, energy insecurity continues to destabilize Nigeria's socio-political landscape and threaten national cohesion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Energy

Energy is very important as it has a larger influence on productivity in sectors like agriculture, commerce, industry, technology, education, health and majorly in various human activities. Oyedepo (2014) claims that energy consumption per capita is a significant factor in assessing a nation's standard of living. He notes that energy has played a vital role in increasing productivity and advancing world civilization, leading to a rise in energy demand. Energy is the ability to do work and cannot be created or destroyed (Robertson, 2014). However, the capacity of energy to perform work can be depleted and destroyed through irreversibility. Energy is present in various forms such as petroleum, natural gas, fossil fuels, and coal, with hydrocarbons and fossil fuels constituting 80% of primary energy usage globally.

According to Secretariat, (2015), energy security can be defined from both the demand and supply sides, and its meaning varies internationally and in domestic contexts. Orazulike (2012) defines energy security as a situation where a country and its citizens have long-term access to energy resources at reasonable prices with minimal risk. Indra (2016) defines energy security as the link between the availability of natural resources for energy consumption and a nation's national security. On the other hand, the International Energy Agency (IEA) defines energy security as the uninterrupted availability of energy resources at affordable prices.

Energy Sector Deficiencies and the Challenge of Sustainable Socio-Economic Growth in Nigeria

Nigeria is a nation with an estimated population nearing 200 million as of 2018. Its capital city is Abuja, and it shares borders with Benin to the west, Cameroon to the east, Niger to the north, and Chad to the northeast. (Anonymous, 2017) The economy possesses significant potential to become the foremost economy in Africa, acknowledged globally for its resource and demographic advantages. However, despite these potentials, numerous issues hindering socio-economic growth can be attributed to various factors, including the inadequate state of the energy sector. Emodi and Dauda (2015) and NERC (2017) put the country's grid supply potential at 12,522 MW, which adversely impacts operational activities, leading to inadequate maintenance and irregular supply of primary fuel, among other detrimental effects.

Although the system attained its maximum capacity of 5,375MW in February 2019, it remains insufficient in light of Nigeria's persistent and substantial energy demand. (Mbah, 2019). Anon (2016) examined that despite adverse conditions, fewer than 50% of the Nigerian population receives grid electricity, with 41.1% in rural areas and 86% in urban areas, while approximately 4% of Nigerians have access to clean energy for domestic use in a country with nearly 49.6% urban population. The present energy demand in Nigeria is 20,000 MW, with the potential to expand to 90,000 MW by 2021(Salau, 2016).

Nigeria's Conventional Energy

Resource	Reserve	Resources in Energy units(billion tonnes	% total conventional energy
Crude oil	23 billion barrels	3.128	21.0
Natural gas	4293 billion m ³	3.679	24.8
Coal and lignite	2.7 billion tonnes	1.882	12.7
Tar	31 billion barrels of oil equivalent	4.216	28.4
hydropower	10,00MW	1.954(100yrs)	100%

Source: Enete & Alabi, (2011)

The table presents Nigeria's conventional energy resources, comprising crude oil, natural gas, coal, tar sands, and hydropower, along with their respective reserves measured in billion tonnes. Tar sands constitute the largest proportion of conventional energy in Nigeria at 28.4%. Crude oil and natural gas account for 21% and 24% of total conventional energy, respectively, while hydropower represents 13.1%, and coal and lignite comprise 12.7% of the total conventional energy in Nigeria.

Nigeria's Non-Conventional Energy Resources

Resources	Reserve	Reserve(billion tonnes)
Fuel wood	43.3 million	1.6645(over 100 years)
Animal waste and crop residue	144 million tonnes	3.034(over 100 years)
Small scale hydropower	734.2 MW	0.134(over 100 years)
Solar radiation	1.0kwm ⁻² land area(peak)	
Wind	2.0-4.0 ms ⁻⁴	

Source: Enete and Alabi, (2011)

The table presents Nigeria's non-conventional energy resources, encompassing fuel wood, animal waste, crop residue, small-scale hydropower, solar radiation, and wind, along with their relative reserves, most of which possess a lifespan exceeding 100 years.

Energy Situation in Nigeria

Nigeria is among the foremost energy powerhouses in Africa, attributable to its vast natural resources, including crude oil, natural gas, lignite, bitumen, tar sands, hydroelectric power, and biomass. Consequently, the nation has successfully generated substantial wealth from energy exports and the advancement of domestic industry.

Sambo (2008) asserts that Nigeria possesses the sixth largest crude oil reserves globally, estimated at 36.2 million barrels, alongside 5,000 billion cubic meters of gas reserves. The majority of these resources are situated in the Niger Delta, Gulf of Guinea, and many other regions of the country. Nonetheless, despite Nigeria's rich energy resources, the nation has encountered considerable difficulties in the management and distribution of these resources, leading to a supply-demand disparity. Okafor and Joe-Uzuegbu (2010) assert that insufficient development and inefficiencies within the energy sector have led to the erratic availability of energy resources over the years.

The energy predicament in rural regions is especially severe, with over 70% of rural inhabitants depending on fuel wood as their principal energy source. This has resulted in deforestation and desertification of the dry region, along with erosion in the southern area, where firewood is utilized for both residential and commercial uses. Deforestation in Nigeria is estimated at almost 350,000 hectares annually, representing 3.6% of the existing forest and woodland area (Report of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Combating Deforestation and Desertification, 2010).

The absence of electricity and petroleum goods in rural regions intensifies the issue, since the costs of petroleum items such as kerosene and petrol frequently surpass 200% of the official pump price in the nation. The inadequate road infrastructure in rural regions hinders the transportation and distribution of energy resources to these locales. Consequently, numerous rural inhabitants are compelled to depend on firewood for their energy requirements, thereby intensifying environmental issues. Nigeria, as a prominent energy powerhouse in Africa endowed with ample natural resources, must confront the issues associated with the

management and distribution of energy resources to facilitate sustainable development, particularly in rural regions where energy access is constrained.

The NNPC regulated gas and petroleum prices, while the Power Holdings Company of Nigeria oversaw power management in Nigeria. Subsidies on energy supplies have been diminished and eliminated to enhance efficiency, leading to increased prices. The privatization of the electrical sector was executed to enhance effectiveness, efficiency, and rural electrification. (Famuyide et al., 2011; Sambo, 2009) Electricity is essential for fundamental development activities such as education, healthcare, potable water, and communication. Its absence and inconsistency have hindered the nation's economic potential, despite its abundant energy resources, including wind, biomass, solar, and hydropower. (Sambo, 2005).

Energy Security Challenges in Nigeria

Nigeria's energy sector, despite its significant role in the global oil business, is afflicted by inefficiencies and challenges, as indicated by Orazulike's (2012) report. These difficulties impact the nation's energy security, and Orazulike examines the specific challenges encountered by various energy resources in Nigeria. Diesel is adversely affected by the inefficiency of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) and the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) in providing electricity to consumers and enterprises. This has caused individuals to depend on diesel as an alternative energy source; yet, the elevated demand for diesel has rendered its availability and pricing a significant concern in Nigeria. Petrol, the most contentious energy resource in Nigeria, is likewise afflicted by inefficiency due to its security being managed by a cadre of elites known as cabals, who make choices on petrol based on their own interests. Nigeria's energy sector has numerous and intricate issues. Nigeria's energy security is compromised by inefficiency and corruption across multiple sectors, despite its significant role in the global oil business. Orazulike (2012) emphasized the difficulties encountered by various energy resources in Nigeria. Individuals and businesses depend on diesel as an alternate electricity source due to the inefficiency of the nation's power distribution corporations. The substantial dependence on diesel has resulted in heightened demand for the resource, while its supply and pricing continue to pose significant challenges in the country. Petroleum, Nigeria's most contentious energy resource, is also plagued by inefficiencies and corruption. The security of petroleum as a resource is controlled by a select set of elites who make distribution decisions based on their own interests rather than those of the broader populace. The natural gas sector has also been impacted by issues of availability and pricing

that deter common individuals from seeking Liquefied Natural Gas. The supply of kerosene has been regulated by prominent intermediaries and unlicensed individuals inside the petroleum industry, leading to elevated costs for consumers.

Additional issues encompass corrupt practices that obstruct the execution of effective policies, instability, and external influences that adversely affect energy security. Nigeria's mono-cultural economy has fostered a significant reliance on oil and gas, with the national budget tightly linked to variations in oil prices. Environmental contamination in energy sectors has incited social unrest in oil regions, resulting in political consequences such as vandalism, kidnapping, trade union activities, and the emergence of cartels in the oil and gas industry. The inadequacy of the country's refining capacity has exacerbated these problems. The existing refineries are underutilized, indicating a potential risk of resource importation, even for Nigeria's indigenous resources. This circumstance has resulted in fuel shortages, black market operations, and elevated pricing. Adenikinju (2010) observed that this has placed the nation in a condition of economic dis-equilibrium, with the energy sector serving as a substantial factor in the overall volatility of the Nigerian economy.

Prospects of Energy Security in Nigeria

Nigeria confronts multiple obstacles in its energy industry; nevertheless, it also presents numerous potential for growth and development. GIZ (2015) reports that 75 million Nigerians remain without electricity, and those who do have access frequently depend on other sources due to recurrent power outages. The renewable energy market is expanding swiftly, evidenced by a 36% rise in off-grid solar product demand, which could yield \$10 billion yearly and offer \$6 billion in savings for households and enterprises, according to REA (2017). The Nigerian Rural Electrification Agency intends to implement 10,000 mini-grids, addressing 30% of the projected electricity demand in Nigeria.

Conventional energy sources like kerosene present health risks to consumers, accounting for around 30% of burn incidents in Nigerian hospitals and contributing to pollution that impacts over 136 million Nigerians, as noted by Oladele and Olabanji (2018). The implementation of solar energy systems may mitigate these health issues and enhance healthcare accessibility, especially in rural regions. Moreover, transitioning to renewable energy sources would enable the allocation of fossil fuels for industrial use. Off Grid Nigeria, 2017

Notwithstanding the obstacles to energy security in Nigeria, there exist prospects for entrepreneurship and economic advancement within the industry. The absence of dependable electricity access has resulted in widespread poverty among Nigerians, especially affecting women. Enhancing the efficiency and efficacy of energy supply can elevate the standard of living and mitigate the risks connected with conventional energy sources. Small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) can gain from enhanced energy supplies, facilitating their growth and generating employment possibilities. Nigeria possesses a substantial quantity of micro, small, and medium-sized firms that constitute a considerable share of employment, and energy security can mitigate operational costs and generate additional jobs. Energy security can help enhance climate change mitigation and sustainability initiatives in Nigeria. Energy management can contribute to a 20% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 by preventing 6.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions each year. United Nations Environment Programme, 2013

The enhancement of industrial energy efficiency offers substantial prospects for Nigeria's economic advancement. Energy conservation continues to be a significant concern in the nation, with electricity and heat serving as the principal energy transporters. To tackle this difficulty, it is essential to undertake energy audits and surveys to identify the most cost-effective energy sources for industrial output. By implementing more efficient technologies, enterprises can decrease energy usage and related expenses while also minimizing their carbon imprint.

Moreover, enhancing industrial energy efficiency will bolster the nation's economic growth by augmenting productivity and competitiveness. This is especially significant given the nation's elevated unemployment rate and the necessity to generate additional job opportunities. Furthermore, it will promote corporate social responsibility by enabling enterprises to mitigate their environmental impact through reduced energy usage and the adoption of sustainable practices. A research by Al-Shakarchi and Abu-Zei in 2002 indicates that over 40% of Nigeria's energy resources are squandered owing to obsolete and deteriorating industrial equipment. This not only impedes efficiency in the energy sector but also jeopardizes sustainability and productivity.

A considerable amount of energy resources in Nigeria is squandered due to outdated and inefficient industrial equipment. This waste undermines energy efficiency in the sector and diminishes the overall output of the nation's industries. Implementing energy-saving measures

will enhance productivity and resource efficiency, ultimately resulting in an increase in the per capita income of Nigerians (Unachukwu, 2011). Improving industrial energy efficiency in Nigeria offers a substantial opportunity for the nation's economic advancement. Energy audits, efficient machinery, and sustainable practices will facilitate the reduction of energy usage, enhance corporate social responsibility, and boost production, ultimately resulting in favorable economic outcomes.

National security

National security pertains to the capacity for self-defense. Chukwuemeka and Ernest (2025) assert that national security cannot be understood solely in military terms. The socio-economic and cultural aspects of development, modernization, and national integration are fundamentally linked to national security. Okoli and Ochim (2016) assert that national security involves the protection of a political entity from various threats, including political, social, economic, military, psychological, and technological factors. Akinyetun (2021) posits that national security includes political resilience, human capital, economic structures, technological expertise, industrial capability, resource availability, and military power. Holmes (1964) defines national security as the comprehensive protection of the state. The fundamental principle of national security is the protection of the state from hostile attacks. It involves the mobilization of military forces to protect the state from external threats and to safeguard state secrets. National security include national defense and the protection of various interests, including economic and geopolitical factors. This study characterizes national security as a state's provision of essential conditions that guarantee economic success and protect human and state security from both internal and external dangers. Threats appear in several forms of attacks, including economic, political, religious, and technological components, such as cybercrime. An overt attack on persons and organizations, both public and private, intended to undermine their capacity for economic prosperity potentially provided by the state, becomes a national security concern (Chukwuemeka, Alhassan & Kenchuks, 2025).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Marxist theory, first advanced by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the mid-19th century, provides a critical framework for analyzing Nigeria's energy challenges and their implications for national security. At its core, Marxism examines the struggles between classes within the economic system, emphasizing how control over resources shapes power relations, inequality,

and conflict. In Nigeria, the energy sector epitomizes a rentier structure where a small elite captures the surplus generated from oil and gas resources while the broader population experiences energy poverty and exclusion. This reflects Marx's view of exploitation, where the ruling class benefits disproportionately from collective wealth (Umeaokwu, & Musa, 2025). The concentration of energy wealth in the hands of political and business elites creates dependency on oil rents, perpetuating corruption, weak institutions, and underinvestment in infrastructure. These dynamics marginalize workers, farmers, and rural populations who lack access to electricity and clean energy, leading to socio-economic discontent. Energy insecurity thus becomes a source of alienation, as citizens perceive the state as serving elite interests rather than public welfare.

Moreover, Marxist analysis explains the link between energy scarcity and insecurity. In the Niger Delta, local resistance to exploitation manifests through militancy, oil bunkering, and pipeline vandalism, illustrating a "class struggle" between marginalized communities and the state–corporate alliance (Chukwuemeka, 2025). Similarly, widespread unemployment resulting from poor energy supply reinforces vulnerabilities that extremist groups in northern Nigeria exploit for recruitment.

The relevance of Marxist theory lies in its ability to situate Nigeria's energy crisis within broader structural inequalities of capitalism and rentier politics. It demonstrates that resolving energy challenges requires not only technical reforms but also the redistribution of resources, stronger accountability, and addressing class-based inequalities. Hence, Marxism helps expose the underlying socio-political contradictions that perpetuate both energy insecurity and national instability in Nigeria.

4. METHODOLOGY

The paper employed a survey research, it made use of both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The study was carried out in the FCT, Abuja, the population of Abuja is 4,026,000, according to National Population Commission projected population for FCT, Abuja, 2024. The targeted population include; the targeted population for this study comprises key stakeholders in Nigeria's energy and security sectors, including staff of the Ministry of Power, the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), security agencies, and residents of energy-impacted communities such as the Niger Delta. These groups directly experience or influence energy

policies and national security outcomes. The sample size was 400 which was derived using Taro Yammer formula for sample size determination, hence 400 questionnaires was sent to the respondents, while 311 was retrieved from the respondents which form the bases for the analysis. A structured questionnaires was designed on a liker scale of agreed, strongly agreed, Neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed. Descriptive analysis was employed in the using SPSS, 26.0.

5. POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ENERGY CHALLENGES AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

Table 1.3 the political economy of Nigeria's energy sector shaped the persistence of energy challenges in the country.

Descriptive Statistics

N = 311

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision Rule
The dominance of oil rent in Nigeria's economy has limited investment in energy infrastructure, leading to persistent power shortages.	4.0611	1.25703	Accepted
Corruption and mismanagement in the energy sector are major factors sustaining Nigeria's energy challenges	4.1447	1.17293	Accepted
The political control of energy resources by elites prevents equitable access to electricity and clean energy in Nigeria	4.1768	1.17126	Accepted
Policy inconsistencies in the energy sector have worsened inefficiency and slowed progress in achieving reliable energy supply.	4.0997	1.24940	Accepted
Energy challenges in Nigeria directly contribute to wider socio-economic problems such as unemployment, poverty, and insecurity	3.9325	1.30950	Accepted
General mean = 4.08296			

Decision rule: 3.00 is the bench mark for acceptance. If the mean is greater than 3.00 it implies acceptance and if it is less than 3.00 it implies rejection.

Interpretation

With 311 respondents and a decision benchmark of 3.00, the results show clear agreement that political-economic factors drive Nigeria's chronic energy problems. The overall mean of 4.083 indicates strong concurrence across items. The highest mean (4.177) concerns elite control of energy resources, suggesting respondents view capture and unequal resource governance as the principal barrier to equitable access. Close behind, corruption and mismanagement scored 4.145, reinforcing that governance failures sustain sector dysfunction. Policy inconsistency (4.100) and the dominance of oil rents (4.061) also register strong agreement, pointing to structural incentives that favour export rents over domestic infrastructure investment. Although slightly lower, the mean for socio-economic consequences (3.933) still indicates acceptance that energy shortfalls worsen unemployment, poverty, and insecurity

Table 1.4 Energy Insecurity Contribution to National Security in Nigeria.

Descriptive Statistics

N = 311

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision rule
Frequent electricity shortages increase economic hardship, which heightens the risk of insecurity in Nigeria	4.0418	1.29572	Accepted
Oil theft and pipeline vandalism in the Niger Delta significantly undermine national security.	4.0386	1.30450	Accepted
Energy poverty in northern Nigeria contributes to youth vulnerability and recruitment into extremist groups.	4.0868	1.23479	Accepted
Gas flaring and environmental degradation from energy insecurity fuel local grievances that escalate into conflicts	4.0579	1.32099	Accepted
Unreliable energy supply weakens industrial productivity, thereby increasing unemployment and insecurity nationwide.	4.0386	1.29955	Accepted
General mean = 4.05274			

Decision rule: 3.00 is the bench mark for acceptance. If the mean is greater than 3.00 it implies acceptance and if it is less than 3.00 it implies rejection.

Interpretations

The respondents is 311, with a decision benchmark of 3.00, the results show strong agreement that energy insecurity substantially contributes to national security threats in Nigeria. The overall mean of 4.053 indicates widespread concurrence across items. The highest mean (4.087) links energy poverty in the north to youth vulnerability and extremist recruitment, underscoring the role of deprivation in fuelling radicalisation. Close means for electricity shortages (4.042), oil theft/pipeline vandalism (4.039), gas flaring and environmental degradation (4.058), and reduced industrial productivity (4.039) reveal a consistent perception that both direct attacks on energy infrastructure and systemic service failures produce economic hardship, grievances, and instability.

6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings reveal that corruption, elite control, rent dependence, and policy inconsistencies significantly sustain Nigeria's energy challenges, with a general mean of 4.08 indicating strong acceptance among respondents. This aligns with Emodi and Yusuf (2015), who argue that Nigeria's rentier structure discourages investment in energy infrastructure, thereby worsening power shortages. Similarly, Omorogbe and Ordor (2018) emphasize that governance failures and elite capture undermine equitable energy access, while Chukwu, Ojohu, & Nnamani, (2022) highlights how policy instability impedes efficiency in the sector. Thus, the persistence of energy insecurity reflects deeper political-economic distortions rather than purely technical shortcomings in Nigeria's energy system.

The findings, with a general mean of 4.05, show strong agreement that energy insecurity directly fuels national security threats in Nigeria. The finding linked energy poverty, vandalism, and electricity shortages to militancy, unemployment, and extremist recruitment. This supports Omorogbe and Ordor (2018), who argue that energy deprivation worsens vulnerability to violence, and Kashi, & Watts, (2008) who connects oil theft and environmental degradation in the Niger Delta to insecurity. Similarly, Ikelegbe (2006) stresses that poor energy access deepens socio-economic grievances that violent groups exploit. Thus, energy insecurity is not only a developmental issue but also a major driver of instability in Nigeria.

7. CONCLUSION

The political economy of Nigeria's energy sector is characterized by corruption, rent dependence, and elite dominance, which have undermined investment in infrastructure and promoted policy inconsistency. These distortions explain the persistence of energy challenges, revealing that technical inefficiencies are rooted in governance failures and resource mismanagement. Energy insecurity significantly undermines national security by fuelling militancy in the Niger Delta, youth radicalisation in the north, and widespread unemployment. Frequent electricity shortages, vandalism, and environmental degradation deepen grievances and instability. Ensuring energy security is therefore critical to addressing socio-economic inequality, reducing conflict, and promoting sustainable peace and development.

Recommendations

- a. Federal Ministry of Power and NERC should strengthen regulatory enforcement by ensuring transparency in tariff structures, curbing corruption, and mandating accountability frameworks that attract long-term investment in infrastructure.
- b. Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) should prioritize domestic energy supply by dedicating a fixed quota of gas for power generation rather than export, reducing dependence on oil rents.
- c. Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), in collaboration with the Navy, should intensify protection of pipelines and energy infrastructure through community-based surveillance to reduce oil theft and vandalism.
- d. National Security Adviser (NSA) and Ministry of Environment should integrate energy-environmental issues into security strategy by addressing gas flaring and environmental degradation that fuel local grievances and militancy.

REFERENCES

- Adenikinju A., (2010). Energy Sector Reform: Prices and Private Sector Response. *Centre for Petroleum, Energy Economics and Law University of Ibadan, Nigeria*, 1-30
- Aguero, J. R., Takayesu, E., Novosel, D., & Masiello, R. (2017). Modernizing the grid: Challenges and opportunities for a sustainable future. *IEEE Power and Energy Magazine*, 15(3), 74-83.
- Akinyetun, T. S. (2022). Torn between Two pandemics: poverty pandemic and coronavirus pandemic in Nigeria. *Southern African Journal of Policy and Development*, 6(1), 7.
- Al-Shakarchi, M.R.G and Abu-Zei, N.S (2002). “A Study of Load Management By Direct Control for Jordan’s Electrical Power System”, *Journal of Science and Technology*, 7(2).
- Anon, (2017)a. *Nigeria Geography*. World atlas, <https://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/africa/nigeria/ngland.html>
- Chukwuemeka, U. U., & Ernest, N. I. (2025). Cybercrime and national security in Nigeria. *British Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 2(7), 182-196.
- Chukwuemeka, U. U., Alhassan, A. A., & Kenchuks, C. K. (2025). Military industrial complex and defence transformation in Nigeria: a critical analysis. *British Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 2(7), 197-214.
- Chukwuemeka, U. U. (2025). Nigeria's economic capacity and BRICS membership; challenges and prospects. *British Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 2(7), 156-168.
- Emodi, N.V., Yusuf, S.D. (2015). Improving electricity access in Nigeria: obstacles and the way forward. *International Journal Energy Economics Policy*, 5(1), 335-351.
- Indra Overland (2016). ‘Energy: The Missing Link in Globalization’, *Energy Research and Social Science*, 14, 123
- Offgrid Nigeria (2017), *RE solutions in Nigeria’s clinics can make patients’ visits pleasing – Ogiehor*.

- Okafor, E.C.N., Joe-Uzuegbu, C.K.A. (2010). Challenges to development of renewable energy for electric power sector In Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Research*, 2(2), 211-216.
- Okoli, A. C., & Ochim, F. (2016). Forestlands and national security in Nigeria: A threat-import analysis. *IIARD International Journal of Political and Administrative Studies*, 2(2), 43-53.
- Orazulike, D. M. (2012). Energy security in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. *International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy*, 2(4), 228-238
- Oyedepo, S. O. (2014). Towards achieving energy for sustainable development in Nigeria. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, 34, 255-272.
- Robertson, B. (2014). Science 101: If Energy Is Neither Created Nor Destroyed, What Happens to It?. *Science and Children*, 51(7), 75-77.
- Salau, S., (2016). *Nigeria's Power Demand to Hit 88,282 MW by 2020*. Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, <https://guardian.ng/business-services/nigerias-power-demand-to-hit-88282mw-by-2020/>.
- Sambo, A.S. (2009). Strategic developments in renewable energy in Nigeria. *International Association for Energy Economics*, 16(3), 15-19.
- Secretariat, E. C. (2015). International Energy Security. *The Hague*.
- Unachukwu, G. O. (2011). Potential economic and social benefits of promoting energy efficiency measures in Nigeria. *Energy Efficiency*, 4(4), 465-472.
- Umearokwu, U. C., & Musa , A. (2025). FOOD POLICY FAILURE AND NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY. *Global Research Journal of Management and Social Sciences (GRJMSS)*, 16(9), 10–21. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1708628>