



Interagency Collaboration and Border Security Management in Adamawa State, Nigeria

BY

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Abstract

This study examines interagency collaboration and border security management in Adamawa State, Nigeria, addressing a critical gap in the literature on how operational coordination among security agencies affects subnational border governance. Prior studies focused on national policy or generalised border insecurity, while this research provides empirical evidence on the operational dynamics, challenges, and strategies for improving multi-agency cooperation in a conflict-prone border region. The main objective was to assess the nature, challenges, and impacts of interagency collaboration on border security management in Adamawa State. The study applied a phenomenological qualitative design, using purposive sampling to conduct Key Informant Interviews (15 participants from security agencies and stakeholders) and two Focus Group Discussions with 6–12 participants per group. Data were analyzed thematically and interpreted through the lens of Routine Activity Theory to link coordination failures with reduced guardianship and increased opportunities for offenders. The first finding identifies weak interagency collaboration characterized by overlapping mandates, poor intelligence sharing, and fragmented operations, which exacerbate border insecurity. The second finding highlights the critical role of community engagement and structured joint operations in enhancing surveillance, trust, and operational effectiveness. Recommendations drawn from the findings include establishing joint command centers, developing interoperable communication systems, conducting regular joint training, and integrating border communities into intelligence frameworks.

Keywords: Interagency Collaboration, Border Security Management, Adamawa State, Routine Activity Theory, Community Engagement



1.1 Introduction

Effective border security management has become a central concern for governance and security, given the scale, speed, and complexity of contemporary transnational threats. States increasingly confront irregular migration, arms trafficking, terrorism financing, human smuggling, and cross-border insurgency that exploit institutional fragmentation among security agencies. My starting position is that border insecurity today is less a function of territorial weakness and more a consequence of coordination failure among state actors operating within the same space. Existing studies privilege technology, militarisation, or legal regimes, but they often understate the role of interagency collaboration in shaping operational outcomes at borders. This study is premised on the argument that border security effectiveness depends on how well security, intelligence, customs, immigration, and local authorities integrate mandates, information, and operational routines. By interrogating the inverted pyramid of literature from global to local contexts, this paper identifies a gap in the empirical understanding of subnational interagency collaboration in fragile border regions, particularly in northeastern Nigeria. The originality of this study lies in extending existing border security scholarship by grounding an analysis of interagency collaboration at the state level, using Adamawa State as a case study.

At the global level, border security scholarship has evolved from a state-centric focus on sovereignty and territorial control to a governance-oriented emphasis on networked security and interagency coordination. Post-Cold War globalization intensified cross-border flows of goods, people, and capital, while simultaneously enabling transnational crime networks to operate across jurisdictions. Studies on the United States, the European



Union, and Australia show that fragmented border governance structures undermine situational awareness and response capacity. In the United States, the creation of the Department of Homeland Security was intended to address coordination failures exposed by the September 11 attacks. Nevertheless, empirical assessments show persistent interagency rivalry among Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and federal law enforcement agencies, which affects intelligence sharing and operational efficiency (Elias, 2021). In the European Union, Frontex has improved joint operations. However, scholars note that national border agencies still operate under divergent legal and operational cultures, limiting deep collaboration (Carrera and den Hertog, 2022). Australia's integrated border management model demonstrates relatively higher coordination through shared databases and joint task forces, yet even there, accountability and role overlap remain contested (McKay et al., 2020).

Recent global literature increasingly links interagency collaboration to risk management frameworks rather than physical border fortification. Broeders and Hampshire (2023) show that effective border control now depends on real-time data exchange, joint risk profiling, and interoperable information systems across agencies. However, this literature largely reflects experiences of advanced economies with high institutional capacity. It offers limited insight into how interagency collaboration functions in developing or conflict-affected borderlands, where institutions face capacity constraints, informal governance structures, and active insurgent threats. It creates a conceptual and empirical gap when such models are applied uncritically to African border contexts.



Within Africa, border security challenges are shaped by colonial boundary legacies, porous borders, and weak interagency coordination frameworks. The African Union estimates that over 80 percent of African borders remain poorly demarcated and inadequately governed, facilitating illicit cross-border activities (African Union Commission, 2020). Regional security initiatives such as the African Integrated Border Management Strategy emphasize interagency cooperation, intelligence sharing, and community participation, yet implementation remains uneven. In the Sahel, studies on Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso show that limited collaboration between military, police, gendarmerie, customs, and immigration services allows armed groups to exploit jurisdictional gaps (Lacher, 2021). In East Africa, Kenya's experience along the Somalia border illustrates how interagency task forces can improve coordination against Al Shabaab infiltration, but also reveals tensions between national security agencies and local authorities over information control (Botha, 2020).

West Africa presents a particularly complex security environment due to the intersection of terrorism, organized crime, and economic migration. ECOWAS protocols promote free movement, but weak coordination among border agencies complicates enforcement. Studies on Ghana and Benin show that customs, immigration, and security agencies often operate in silos, leading to duplication of efforts and corruption risks (Aning and Atta-Asamoah, 2022). Nigeria's borders sit at the center of this regional dynamic, sharing extensive boundaries with Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Benin. Despite numerous policy reforms, Nigeria continues to face serious border security challenges linked to arms proliferation, smuggling, and insurgency spillover from the Lake Chad Basin.



National-level literature on Nigeria highlights structural weaknesses in border governance, including overlapping mandates among the Nigeria Immigration Service, the Nigeria Customs Service, the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigerian Army, and intelligence agencies. The closure of Nigeria's land borders between 2019 and 2020 was justified on security and economic grounds. However, empirical assessments show that poor interagency coordination limited its effectiveness and generated unintended socioeconomic consequences (Onuoha, 2021). Recent studies emphasize that, while Nigeria has adopted elements of integrated border management, operational collaboration remains ad hoc and personality-driven rather than institutionalized (Akinyemi, 2023). Most Nigerian studies focus on federal-level policies or national border corridors, with limited attention to how collaboration operates at the state level, where borders are lived, contested, and enforced daily.

Adamawa State occupies a strategic position along Nigeria's northeastern border with Cameroon and lies within the broader Lake Chad Basin security complex. The state has experienced sustained cross-border movements linked to Boko Haram insurgency, arms trafficking, cattle rustling, and irregular migration. Despite the presence of multiple security agencies, border insecurity persists, raising questions about the effectiveness of interagency collaboration. Existing literature on Adamawa largely focuses on the impacts of insurgency, humanitarian displacement, and military operations, rather than on the everyday coordination mechanisms among border management agencies (Mustapha and Meagher, 2022). This reveals a clear empirical gap.



This study addresses that gap by examining how interagency collaboration shapes outcomes in border security management in Adamawa State. It extends existing scholarship by shifting the analytical lens from national policy frameworks to subnational operational realities. Rather than creating an entirely new theory, the study advances scholarship by empirically extending integrated border management and interagency collaboration frameworks into a fragile borderland context. By doing so, it contributes original insights into how institutional coordination, information sharing, and role clarity affect security outcomes at Nigeria's borders. This focus responds directly to limitations in global and African literature, which often assume institutional coherence that does not exist in contexts like Adamawa State.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The borderlands of Adamawa State remain insecure despite the sustained presence of multiple security agencies, revealing a persistent problem of weak interagency coordination at the operational level. Adamawa shares an extensive and porous border with Cameroon within Nigeria's northeast, a region affected by Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province insurgency for over a decade. Empirical data indicate that the conflict has resulted in more than 35,000 civilian deaths and over 2.9 million internally displaced persons across the Lake Chad Basin, with Adamawa serving as both a transit and host state for displaced populations (UNDP, 2021; International Organization for Migration, 2023). Security incident data further show that insurgent attacks on military locations and border communities in Adamawa and neighboring states remain recurrent, confirming the continued exploitation of cross-border spaces by armed groups (ACLED,



2024). These patterns point to structural weaknesses in border governance rather than the absence of security actors.

Nigeria's land border porosity significantly facilitates the unregulated movement of fighters, small arms, and illicit commodities, intensifying insecurity and undermining state authority. Estimates suggest that over 70 percent of illicit small arms circulating in Nigeria enter through poorly monitored land borders, many of which cut across the Adamawa-Cameroon axis (Small Arms Survey, 2020). Research further shows that arms trafficking networks and insurgent logistics chains rely on gaps between immigration, customs, military, and intelligence agencies, where information sharing and joint patrols remain limited (Onuoha, 2021). Despite the concentration of security institutions in Adamawa, there is little empirical evidence assessing how these agencies coordinate intelligence, conduct joint operations, or manage overlapping mandates at the state and local levels. Most existing studies focus on national border policy, insurgency dynamics, or generalized border porosity, with limited attention to interagency collaboration in specific border states (Akinyemi, 2023).

This gap matters because weak interagency collaboration produces fragmented intelligence flows, duplication of patrols, and delayed responses to cross-border threats, directly affecting border communities, traders, humanitarian actors, and local governments. In Adamawa, cross-border insecurity disrupts agricultural trade, restricts market access, and undermines livelihoods in border communities that depend on transnational exchange (World Bank, 2022). It also erodes public trust in security institutions and increases civilian exposure to violence. However, few studies empirically



link interagency coordination practices to concrete border security outcomes at the subnational level. This study addresses that gap. The main objective is to examine the nature, challenges, and effects of interagency collaboration on border security management in Adamawa State, with a view to identifying operational barriers and developing evidence-based strategies to strengthen coordinated border governance.

1.3 Conceptual Clarifications

i. Interagency Collaboration

Interagency collaboration refers to structured and sustained interaction among government agencies with overlapping or complementary mandates to achieve shared security objectives. In the Nigerian context, it involves coordinated planning, intelligence sharing, joint operations, and harmonised command structures among agencies such as the Nigerian Army, the Nigeria Immigration Service, the Nigeria Customs Service, the Nigeria Police Force, and intelligence services. Onuoha (2021) argues that Nigeria's security failures in border spaces stem less from manpower shortages than from institutional fragmentation and weak collaborative frameworks. Empirical evidence shows that agencies often operate in silos, driven by rivalry, unclear role boundaries, and competition for authority, which undermines collective border governance. This study advances the concept by treating interagency collaboration not as an abstract policy ideal but as a measurable operational process whose effectiveness can be assessed at the subnational level.



ii. Border Security Management

Border security management refers to the strategies, institutions, and practices deployed by the state to regulate cross-border movement while preventing security threats. Akinyemi (2023) conceptualises border security management in Nigeria as a governance challenge shaped by porous boundaries, weak coordination, and limited institutional capacity. Unlike militarised border control approaches, Nigerian border security management involves multiple civilian and military agencies operating simultaneously within the same space. This multiplicity creates coordination costs that directly affect threat detection and response. This study refines the concept by linking border security management outcomes in Adamawa State to the quality of interagency collaboration, rather than to border porosity alone, thereby shifting analytical focus from geography to governance.

iii. Border Governance in Nigeria

Border governance refers to the broader institutional and policy framework that governs borders, including legal mandates, operational norms, and accountability mechanisms. Abdullahi (2020) notes that Nigeria's border governance system suffers from overlapping institutional mandates and weak enforcement of collaborative protocols, particularly at the state and local levels. Border governance, therefore, shapes how agencies interact, share authority, and engage border communities. This study offers a critical insight by positioning border governance in Adamawa State as a lived, subnational practice in which



interagency relations determine security outcomes, thereby extending Nigerian border governance scholarship beyond national policy analysis to everyday operational realities.

1.4 Research Methodology

This study adopted a phenomenological research design using a qualitative approach to generate in-depth insights into the effectiveness and challenges of border security management in Adamawa State, with particular emphasis on interagency collaboration among security actors. The design was appropriate because it allowed the study to capture lived experiences, perceptions, and operational realities of actors directly involved in border security management. The study sample frame for the Key Informant Interviews consisted of fifteen participants drawn from relevant security agencies and selected community stakeholders with direct knowledge of border operations and security dynamics. Purposive sampling was used to select key informants from agencies such as the Nigerian Army, the Nigeria Immigration Service, the Nigeria Customs Service, the Nigeria Police Force, and local community leadership structures, based on their roles and experience.

Data collection involved structured, in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions to elicit detailed narratives and collective perspectives. Two Focus Group Discussion sessions were conducted, with each group comprising between six and twelve participants, in line with Babbie's (2001) recommendation. These methods generated rich qualitative data that captured institutional practices, coordination challenges, and local perceptions of security. The qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis, which involved



systematic coding and identification of recurring patterns, themes, and relationships. To enhance validity, findings from the Key Informant Interviews were triangulated with insights from the Focus Group Discussions, ensuring consistency and strengthening the credibility of the analysis.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Routine Activity Theory, originally propounded by Cohen and Felson (1979) and later advanced by Felson (1998) and Clarke (1995). The theory explains crime occurrence as a convergence of a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of capable guardianship. Its relevance to border security management lies in its focus on guardianship, which, in border contexts, translates into coordinated presence, surveillance, and institutional control by security agencies. Previous Nigerian studies have applied Routine Activity Theory mainly to urban crime, terrorism, or cybercrime, often treating the state as a single guardian entity (Onuoha, 2018). This study applies the theory differently by disaggregating guardianship across multiple border security agencies and empirically examining how weak interagency collaboration reduces collective guardianship in Adamawa State.

Empirical studies show that when guardianship is fragmented, border spaces become opportunities for insurgents and traffickers (Adejumo, 2019). By linking guardianship failure to poor intelligence sharing, mandate overlap, and weak joint operations, the study extends the theory to subnational border governance. Critics argue that Routine Activity Theory underplays structural and political drivers of insecurity and focuses excessively



on opportunity rather than motivation (Olofinbiyi and Adebayo, 2016). Others contend that it lacks sensitivity to complex conflict environments (Abrahamsen, 2017). This study addresses these critiques by embedding routine activity variables within Nigeria's institutional and conflict context and by demonstrating that strengthening interagency collaboration enhances guardianship without ignoring broader political and security dynamics (Okoli and Ugwu, 2020).

1.6 Review of Related Literature

Global Perspective of Interagency Collaboration and Border Security Management

This review situates interagency collaboration and border security management within a layered empirical discourse that moves from global experiences to African and Nigerian realities, interrogating how collaboration failures shape border insecurity rather than merely describing border threats. According to Andreas (2017), contemporary border security in advanced states such as the United States and the European Union has shifted from unilateral border control to multi-agency risk management involving customs, immigration, police, and intelligence services. His empirical analysis shows that border insecurity persists not because borders are unguarded, but because agencies operate with competing mandates, incompatible databases, and weak coordination protocols. Andreas convincingly demonstrates that interagency rivalry reduces intelligence fusion and delays operational response, creating governance gaps that transnational criminal networks exploit. However, his work assumes relatively strong institutional capacity and stable political environments. This assumption limits its explanatory reach for fragile border regions where institutional weakness, conflict, and informal authority structures shape



collaboration outcomes. The study also treats collaboration largely as a design and policy problem, offering limited insight into how collaboration functions in everyday operational settings. This limitation highlights the need to empirically examine interagency collaboration as a lived practice in conflict-affected borderlands.

In the study of African border governance, Aning and Atta-Asamoah (2022) analyze interagency collaboration across selected West African states and show that regional integrated border management frameworks have not translated into effective operational coordination. Using field data from ECOWAS border corridors, they demonstrate that security agencies often engage in parallel operations, hoard intelligence, and compete for institutional relevance. Their strength lies in empirically linking poor collaboration to the persistence of cross-border terrorism, arms trafficking, and smuggling. However, their analysis remains largely regional and comparative, treating national borders as uniform units of analysis. By not disaggregating findings to subnational border spaces, the study underplays how collaboration failures vary across states and localities. This creates a gap in understanding how specific border states experience interagency coordination differently, particularly in zones of active insurgency.

Similarly, Onuoha (2021) examines Nigeria's border security architecture and argues that interagency rivalry among the Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Customs Service, the military, and intelligence agencies undermines effective border management. Drawing on policy documents and security incident data, he shows that overlapping mandates and unclear command structures weaken collective guardianship at border points. His work is significant in shifting the discourse from border porosity to institutional dysfunction.



However, the study is heavily anchored at the federal policy level and assumes that national reforms automatically shape local practice. It offers limited empirical evidence on how interagency collaboration operates within specific border states, where informal practices and local dynamics often override formal policy. This weakens its ability to explain persistent insecurity in states such as Adamawa despite national-level reforms.

According to Okoli and Ugwu (2020), border insecurity in Nigeria's northeast reflects a breakdown in everyday security governance involving state agencies and border communities. Their empirical study highlights how weak collaboration among security agencies limits information flow and reduces community trust, thereby enabling insurgent mobility across borders. This work is valuable for expanding the concept of collaboration beyond formal institutions to include community-level actors. However, collaboration is treated as a generalized deficiency rather than as a set of specific operational relationships among agencies. The lack of focused analysis of interagency coordination mechanisms leaves unanswered questions about how failures of collaboration concretely affect border security outcomes. This study builds on their insight by empirically examining interagency collaboration at the state level, thereby extending existing scholarship and addressing a critical gap in the literature.

1.7 Challenges of Inter-agency Collaboration and Border Security Management in Nigeria

This section examines documented challenges of interagency collaboration and border security management in Nigeria by critically interrogating empirical Nigerian scholarship,



moving from broader national patterns to specific operational realities. According to Onuoha (2021), interagency collaboration in Nigeria's border security architecture is fundamentally constrained by overlapping mandates, institutional rivalry, and weak coordination protocols among the Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Customs Service, the military, and intelligence agencies. Drawing on national security reports and border policy reviews, he demonstrates that agencies often operate as autonomous units, prioritising institutional control over collective security outcomes. This rivalry leads to intelligence hoarding, parallel patrols, and delayed joint responses to cross-border threats. Onuoha's contribution is significant because it reframes border insecurity as an institutional governance problem rather than a function of border porosity alone. However, his analysis remains heavily centralized, focusing on federal institutions and national policy reforms. It pays limited attention to how these coordination failures manifest differently across border states. By not disaggregating operational dynamics to subnational contexts, the study underestimates how local command structures, personalities, and informal practices intensify collaboration challenges in states such as Adamawa, thereby limiting its explanatory depth.

In the study of internal security governance, Okoli and Ugwu (2020) argue that Nigeria's border insecurity reflects deeper failures of interagency synergy and civil security relations, particularly in the northeast. Using empirical data from border communities, they show that poor collaboration among security agencies weakens intelligence circulation and erodes trust between state actors and local populations. Their work extends the collaboration discourse by highlighting how institutional fragmentation



affects community-based intelligence, a critical factor in border surveillance. This perspective is valuable because it situates interagency failure within everyday security practices rather than solely in formal structures. However, collaboration is treated as a generalized institutional weakness, without systematically examining how specific agencies interact operationally at border posts and patrol zones. The absence of agency-level analysis limits the study's ability to identify precise coordination bottlenecks that policy interventions could target.

Similarly, Akinyemi (2023) examines border security management in Nigeria and identifies poor interagency coordination, corruption, and lack of integrated information systems as central challenges undermining border control. His analysis links collaboration failures directly to arms smuggling, irregular migration, and insurgent mobility across Nigeria's land borders. Akinyemi's strength lies in connecting institutional weaknesses to concrete security outcomes, thereby reinforcing the argument that collaboration is central to effective border management. However, the study relies largely on secondary data and national-level assessments, offering limited empirical insight into how collaboration challenges play out within specific border states. This gap underscores the need for state-level studies that empirically examine interagency collaboration as an operational process, which this research addresses by focusing on Adamawa State.



1.8 Strategies to Improve Inter-agency Collaboration and Border Security Management in Adamawa State

This section reviews Nigerian empirical literature proposing strategies to improve interagency collaboration and border security management, and interrogates how these solutions address coordination deficits across national-to-local border contexts. According to Onapajo (2019), improving interagency collaboration in Nigeria's border security system requires the institutionalisation of joint operational frameworks rather than reliance on ad hoc task forces. Using evidence from counterterrorism coordination in Nigeria's northeast, he argues that agencies perform better when collaboration is embedded through joint command structures, shared operational guidelines, and routine interagency briefings. His study supports the view that formalised cooperation reduces rivalry and improves response time to cross-border threats. However, Onapajo's analysis is largely focused on counterterrorism operations and does not sufficiently address civilian border management agencies such as customs and immigration. This limits the applicability of his proposed strategies to comprehensive border security management, where non-military actors play central roles. The absence of subnational analysis further weakens the relevance of his recommendations for state-level border governance, such as in Adamawa.

In the study of border governance reform, Alao (2020) emphasizes capacity-building and information-sharing as critical strategies to improve interagency collaboration in Nigeria. He argues that joint training programmes, interoperable communication systems, and integrated data platforms can reduce mistrust and operational disconnect among security



agencies. His work is valuable because it links collaboration improvement directly to institutional learning and professionalisation. However, Alao's recommendations remain largely normative and policy-oriented, with limited empirical evidence on implementation outcomes in Nigeria's border states. The study assumes that national-level institutional reforms will cascade downward, without interrogating how state-level power relations and informal practices may obstruct collaboration. This gap underscores the need to empirically validate such strategies in specific border environments, such as Adamawa State.

Similarly, Ewi (2021) examines Nigeria's border security challenges and argues that strengthening civil-military coordination and community engagement is essential for effective interagency collaboration. Drawing on field observations in border-affected states, he contends that collaboration improves when security agencies jointly engage border communities in intelligence gathering and surveillance. This approach expands collaboration beyond state institutions and enhances local legitimacy. While this strategy is contextually grounded, the study does not clearly differentiate the roles of the agencies involved in community engagement, which risks reproducing mandate overlap. It also stops short of examining how such collaborative models can be institutionalised at the state level. This limitation underscores the relevance of this study, which focuses on identifying practical, state-specific strategies to strengthen interagency collaboration and border security management in Adamawa State.



1.9 Data Presentation and Analysis

The data analysis on interagency collaboration and border security management in Adamawa State reveals that the effectiveness of border security is closely linked to the degree of coordination, information sharing, and operational synergy among security agencies. Findings from the Key Informant Interviews (KII) indicate that multiple agencies, including the Nigerian Army, the Nigeria Immigration Service, the Nigeria Customs Service, the Nigeria Police Force, and the Department of State Services, are actively involved in border security operations. Respondents consistently reported that while agencies have clear mandates, the operational reality is characterized by overlapping roles, jurisdictional ambiguities, and limited joint planning. For example, officers from the Nigeria Customs Service noted that while they are responsible for monitoring goods and contraband, the presence of military and police personnel often creates confusion over command authority during joint patrols. Similarly, respondents from the Nigerian Immigration Service indicated that intelligence gathered at border posts is rarely shared in real time with other agencies, reducing the effectiveness of surveillance and response. These findings support Onuoha's (2021) position that overlapping mandates and poor coordination weaken border security in Nigeria.

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with local community stakeholders further highlighted the impact of weak interagency collaboration on civilian security. Community members emphasized that inconsistent patrol schedules, lack of joint operations, and delayed responses to incidents of cross-border criminality increase vulnerability to cattle rustling, arms smuggling, and insurgent infiltration. Participants noted that border communities



often serve as de facto informants to multiple agencies without seeing tangible security outcomes, which diminishes trust in state institutions. It aligns with the observations of Okoli and Ugwu (2020), who found that poor collaboration reduces community confidence and limits the generation of actionable intelligence. Conversely, a few community stakeholders reported occasional successful joint operations, particularly when security agencies conducted coordinated raids against suspected insurgent camps, indicating that collaboration, when structured and sustained, produces measurable improvements in border security outcomes.

Secondary data corroborate these empirical insights. Reports from the Nigerian Security Tracker (ACLED, 2024) show that insurgent attacks in Adamawa's border communities remain high, with over 120 incidents recorded between 2023 and 2025, underscoring persistent security challenges despite the presence of multiple agencies. Similarly, the Nigeria Customs Service and the Nigeria Immigration Service's annual operational reports highlight significant seizures and arrests. However, analysis shows that these successes are often isolated events rather than outcomes of systematic interagency collaboration. This pattern supports the KII and FGD findings that operational fragmentation limits collective guardianship at border posts. The Routine Activity Theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979) provides a useful framework for interpreting these findings: the lack of capable guardianship—here, operationalized as coordinated multi-agency presence—creates opportunities for offenders, in this case insurgents, smugglers, and traffickers, to exploit border porosity. When guardianship is fragmented due to weak collaboration, suitable



targets (such as border communities, livestock, or unmonitored smuggling routes) become accessible, increasing the risk of criminal acts.

The KIIs also revealed institutional and logistical barriers to collaboration. Respondents highlighted inadequate communication infrastructure, lack of standardized protocols for intelligence sharing, and limited joint training as major challenges. Officers noted that interagency rivalry and competition for recognition occasionally undermine joint initiatives. These findings are reinforced by secondary literature: Akinyemi (2023) notes that corruption, resource constraints, and the absence of integrated data systems reduce the effectiveness of border management. However, the KII and FGD data expand on this by demonstrating that these barriers are compounded at the operational level in Adamawa State, where local dynamics, informal networks, and the immediate threat of insurgency influence how agencies interact.

Despite the challenges, respondents identified practical strategies to strengthen collaboration. KIIs suggested establishing formal joint command centers at key border posts, standardizing protocols for intelligence sharing, conducting regular joint training exercises, and integrating community stakeholders into operational planning. FGDs echoed these recommendations, emphasizing the importance of predictable patrol schedules and transparent engagement with local communities to enhance trust and timely reporting. These strategies align with the propositions of Routine Activity Theory: increasing the presence of capable guardians through structured interagency coordination reduces opportunities for offenders and strengthens situational control. Secondary studies, including Onapajo (2019) and Alao (2020), support these measures, noting that



institutionalized collaboration, interoperable communication systems, and capacity building significantly improve border security outcomes in Nigeria.

Synthesizing the findings, it is evident that interagency collaboration in Adamawa State is both a functional and a conceptual challenge. While mandates and resources exist, operational realities reflect fragmented efforts that undermine collective effectiveness. Joint operations, intelligence integration, and community engagement are central to effective border security management. By triangulating KIIs, FGDs, and secondary sources, the study demonstrates that border insecurity in Adamawa is less about the absence of agencies and more about the quality of collaboration and guardianship. The Routine Activity Theory explains this dynamic: coordinated presence, timely information sharing, and structured interagency interaction serve as capable guardians, reducing criminal opportunities and enhancing security outcomes. Therefore, strengthening interagency collaboration is not only a policy imperative but also an operational necessity for reducing cross-border threats and improving civilian protection in Adamawa State.

1.10 Discussions of Major Findings

The analysis revealed four major findings that directly address the thrust of this study: the operational dynamics of interagency collaboration and its effect on border security management in Adamawa State. First, the study found that interagency collaboration is weak, with overlapping mandates, jurisdictional ambiguities, and poor intelligence sharing among the Nigerian Army, the Nigeria Customs Service, the Nigeria Immigration Service, and other security agencies. This finding confirms Onuoha's (2021) observation



that institutional rivalry undermines collective security. However, it extends the literature by demonstrating how these coordination failures manifest at the state level, showing that national-level reforms often fail to translate into subnational operational effectiveness. The conceptual implication is that guardianship, as theorized in Routine Activity Theory, is fragmented, creating opportunities for insurgents and traffickers.

Second, community engagement emerged as a critical factor in effective border security. FGDs revealed that communities often act as informal intelligence providers but lack integration into formal security structures. This finding complements Okoli and Ugwu (2020), who emphasized the importance of community-based intelligence. However, this study critically interrogates the operational gap between community input and actionable interagency response, highlighting a missed opportunity to convert local knowledge into coordinated security action.

Third, the study found that logistical and technological barriers, such as incompatible communication systems and limited joint training, significantly hinder collaboration. This partially supports Akinyemi (2023), who linked operational inefficiencies to corruption and resource constraints. However, this study highlights that, even when resources exist, institutional and procedural fragmentation prevents effective coordination, underscoring the theoretical notion that capable guardianship requires structural integration rather than mere resource provision.

Finally, the study revealed that structured joint operations significantly improve border security outcomes, suggesting that institutionalizing interagency coordination can



mitigate cross-border threats. This aligns with Onapajo (2019) but differs in demonstrating empirically at the state level that sustained collaboration produces measurable reductions in insurgent mobility and illicit trafficking. Conceptually, this finding validates Routine Activity Theory in a subnational context, showing that enhanced guardianship through coordination directly reduces opportunities for offenders while reinforcing the study's focus on operationalized interagency collaboration rather than abstract policy prescriptions.

1.10 Conclusion

This study demonstrates that interagency collaboration is the cornerstone of effective border security management in Adamawa State, with both conceptual and theoretical implications. Conceptually, the findings reveal that fragmented mandates, poor intelligence sharing, and weak community integration reduce the effectiveness of security agencies, confirming that operational realities, not only formal policies, shape border governance outcomes. Theoretically, the study extends Routine Activity Theory by showing that capable guardianship in border contexts is collective and multi-agency; when collaboration fails, suitable targets, such as border communities, smuggling routes, and insurgent access points, remain exposed, creating opportunities for offenders. Unlike previous studies that focus on national-level assessments or abstract institutional critiques (Onuoha, 2021; Akinyemi, 2023), this research provides empirical evidence at the state level, demonstrating how operational, logistical, and community-level factors concretely affect interagency coordination. It also emphasizes that structured joint operations and community engagement are not merely complementary strategies but essential



mechanisms for operationalized guardianship. By linking theory to practice in a subnational setting, the study shifts the analytical lens from generalized institutional failure to measurable collaboration processes, offering a more nuanced understanding of how border security can be strengthened through coordinated action.

1.11 Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the study recommended that the relevant authorities should:

1. Establish formal joint command centers at strategic border posts in Adamawa State to institutionalize interagency collaboration and reduce operational overlaps.
2. Develop interoperable communication systems and standardized protocols for real-time intelligence sharing among all border security agencies.
3. Implement regular joint training exercises and simulation drills to enhance coordination, capacity, and mutual trust among security personnel.
4. Integrate border communities into intelligence and surveillance frameworks to strengthen early warning mechanisms and enhance civilian trust in security operations.

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