E-ISSN: 2997-934X

American Journal of Business Practice

https://semantjournals.org/index.php/AJBP

| Research Article

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Insecurities Challenges and Research Programme of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

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Abstract: Research programme of tertiary institutions are regarded as the second most ranked programme with focus in the provision of solutions to national and international pressing problems. Research programme of the tertiary institutions id vital to the social, economic and technological advancement of the country. The paper examined the impact of insecurities on research programmes of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Secondary data were used in the paper. The data were collected from the online and print publications. The paper concluded that insecurities in Nigeria has affected research programme of tertiary institutions, led to suspension research programme and led to death of researchers and research students. Based on this finding, the paper recommends that government should address problems breeding insecurities in Nigeria such as the high rate of unemployment. Government should increase investment on security sector. Artificial intelligence should be deployed to all tertiary institutions to aid effective security management in the various tertiary institutions.

Key words: Insecurities, Research Programme, Tertiary Education.

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Introduction

Tertiary education encompasses specialized learning pursued beyond high school, including undergraduate and graduate credentials such as certificates, diplomas, and academic degrees. This form of education, which is non-compulsory, is provided by institutions like colleges, polytechnics, and universities. Tertiary education can be delivered through various modalities, including in-person, virtual, or distance learning (Top-hat, 2023). It is a structured and organized system designed to foster the holistic development of individuals and drive societal transformation through comprehensive teaching, research, and community service (Ogunode, Edinoh&Okolie, 2023). Tertiary institutions represent a microcosm of society, reflecting a diverse range of people, cultures, lifestyles, and values (Ogunode &Odo, 2023). This educational level plays a critical role in shaping individuals and contributing to societal progress by addressing complex challenges and advancing knowledge.

The goals of tertiary education are multifaceted and aimed at driving national development through the training of high-level manpower (Ogunode, Edinoh, &Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2023). These goals include providing accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in both formal and informal settings to address the diverse needs and interests of all Nigerians. Tertiary education aims to offer high-quality career counseling and lifelong learning programs that equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for self-reliance and success in the workforce. Additionally, it seeks to reduce skill shortages by producing skilled manpower that meets labor market demands, promote scholarship, entrepreneurship, and community service, foster national unity, and enhance both national and international understanding and interaction (FRN, 2013).

Despite these objectives, the programs of tertiary institutions in Nigeria face significant threats from insecurity. This paper examines the impact of insecurity on the research programs of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, highlighting how such threats undermine the ability of these institutions to fulfill their educational and developmental roles. The focus is on understanding how insecurity affects the execution and outcomes of research activities, which are crucial for advancing knowledge and addressing societal challenges.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of insecurity on research programs within tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Specifically, the study aims to investigate how various forms of insecurity—such as violence, theft, and political instability—affect the implementation and outcomes of research activities. By analyzing these impacts, the study seeks to understand the extent to which insecurity undermines the ability of tertiary institutions to conduct effective research, which is essential for advancing knowledge, addressing societal issues, and contributing to national development.

Concept of Research Programme

Research encompasses a range of activities aimed at identifying problems, gathering new data, and finding solutions through carefully designed procedures and logical analysis. It represents an intensive and extensive search for solutions to societal issues, including those within the realm of education (Ogunode, Jegede, Adah, Audu&Ajape, 2020a). Research is often categorized into two types of definitions: conceptual and operational.

Conceptual definitions: describe concepts using other concepts. For example, "political violence" might be conceptually defined as "aggressive behavior towards political institutions and individuals in political roles." Similarly, "intelligence" could be defined conceptually as "the ability to think abstractly" or "the ability to solve problems."

Operational definitions: on the other hand, bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and empirical observations. They involve a series of instructions detailing the operations that

researchers must undertake to demonstrate the presence or degree of a particular empirical occurrence represented by a concept. These definitions provide clear guidelines on how to measure and observe the concept in practical terms, ensuring that research findings are grounded in observable phenomena (National Open University, 2020).

Research can simply be defined as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Research is an important tool for advancing knowledge for promoting progress, and for enabling scholars to relate more effectively to the environment, to accomplish their objectives, and to resolve conflicts (National Open University 2020). According to IbidapoObe, (2010) research refers to creating new knowledge or new insights on knowledge, or unlocking knowledge. Research as an activity that involves observation and description of the characteristic properties of objects or events to discover relationships between variables and developing generalization that may predict future occurrences (Okeke 2004). Research as arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Research is oriented towards the discovering of the relationships that exist among the phenomena of the world in which we live (Osualla, 2001).

Research according to Bako (2005) is a systematic search and investigation for increasing the sum of knowledge; and research and development (R&D) as the search and application of this knowledge for the development of improved products, services and industrial processes of capital development. Research is seen by Ajoku (2004) as the search for knowledge, truth, similarities and relationships, and finding solutions to problems through the systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Ogunode and Abubakar(2020) submitted that research is the second cardinal programme of higher institutions. Research is very important to the development of the society. Research is conducted mostly in the higher institutions environment with the objectives to solve problems affecting the society. The academic staff is saddled with the responsibilities of carrying out researches in the universities. Conducting research is one criterion for measuring their performance. …..observed that students in higher institutions are saddled with the responsibilities of carrying out researches in their various field as one of the criteria for graduation.

There are different forms of research conducted in tertiary institutions. Research in tertiary institutions according to Yusuf (2012) includes;

i) **Individual research:** This is initiated and conducted by an individual researcher or a team of researchers who may seek funding from the University Board of Research or from alternative funding agencies, including international organisations, NGOs and the private sector.

(ii) **Institutional research:** This is initiated and supervised by the institution or a unit of the institution (faculty, department etc) and usually involves a team of researchers. Funding is internal, except where assistance is obtained from external sources.

(iii) **Commissioned or contractual research:** This is carried out at the instance of an external body, which may be government or a government organ, the private sector, NGOs etc, which also funds the research. The sponsor has right of ownership of theresearch results.

(iv) **Collaborative research:** This is a joint research effort with common objectives or goals and involving the sharing of ideas, methodologies, facilities etc between individual researchers or research teams, from same or different institutions, organisations, countries or regions of the world.

(v) **Student research:** This is an undergraduate or postgraduate research project undertaken by a student, supervised by the student's department, and the results of which are reported in student's

thesis or dissertation. Student research is usually jointly funded between the student himself (or his sponsor) and his department.

Concept of Insecurity

Insecurity is defined as a state or event that induces fear and threats, making individuals or institutions unable to engage in productive activities (Ogunode &Adanna, 2022). According to Nwosu, Joseph, Chukwuka, &Ukwunna (2019), insecurity involves feelings of uncertainty, danger, or threats to life. It encompasses negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, and a sense of injustice. When individuals lack control over their situations and must depend on the cooperation of others whose reliability cannot be guaranteed, they may experience frustration and insecurity. This sense of insecurity poses a significant threat to learning, as prevailing conflicts within communities can have detrimental effects on educational activities. For instance, disturbances and unrest in areas surrounding schools can disrupt teaching and learning processes, thereby undermining the overall educational experience (Ogunode, Umeora, &Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2022).

Insecurity according to Ubong, (2016) "occurs whenever people have a feeling of self-doubt, or feel vulnerable and susceptible to injury or harm particularly for a sustained period, insecurity is at work. Insecurity according to Sanni, (2015) is the sense of vulnerability, defenselessness, lack of protection and danger present in the study area, influencing females" participation in education programmes. Insecurity as the antithesis of security and has attracted such common descriptors as want of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, want of confidence, state of doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, instability, trouble, lack of protection and being unsafe, and others (Achumba, Ighomereho&Akpor-Robaro, 2013).

Insecurity as a breach of peace and security whether historical, ethnic, religious, civil, political or psychological that has contributed to prevalent conflicts the country has witnessed over the years, resulting in war and destruction and loss of lives and properties, in which the education sector has not been left untouched (Eme, 2011). Olamosu (2000), also viewed insecurity as a state or condition in the life of a social unit, system, organization or society in which the existence of a; problem assumes critical dimension to the extent that the survival or existence of the social system or structure is threatened. Insecurity as a degenerated stage of conflict, threats to human security, intense violence characterized by fighting, death, injury, etc (Best 2006). Insecurity globally affected tertiary institutions administration by causing unstable academic programme (Wale&Temitope, 2019).

Nnamdi (2021) as cited in Ogunode, Godwin and Unoaku (2021), outlined reasons why educational institutions are being attacked by insurgents as follows:

1. Schools are soft targets: According to Sadiq, et al (2021) Boko Haram fighters, bandits and other miscreants have found schools in some states in the region as soft targets and have abducted hundreds of students in recent times. States that recently witnessed the abduction of students and in some instances teachers include Katsina, Niger, Kano, Sokoto, Zamfara and Kaduna. All the incidents were attributed to bandits. Schools are seen as soft targets by the insurgents as a result of increasing security around key government institutions and agencies. They often have weak security, with few or no fences, and guards are few and poorly trained. State and Federal security forces are unlikely to be an impediment, as they are stretched woefully across the length and breadth of the country.

2. Secondly, mass abductions of children are issues that require urgent attention. They attract far more national and international media coverage, and tend to stir more public outrage than kidnapping adult villagers or travelers on highways. The media glare forces the government almost immediately into negotiations and may result in quicker government concessions to speed up the children's release.

3. Thirdly, kidnappers appear to be highly motivated by the concessions they can extract in exchange for releasing abductees, although state and federal officials have repeatedly denied making any. Hard evidence remains slim, but there have been several reports since the Chibok case in 2014 of governments paying ransom, releasing armed group members from detention or agreeing to halt military operations.

Impact of Insecurity on Research Programme of Tertiary institutions

There are many impacts of insecurity on the research programmes of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Some of these impacts include; disruption of research programme, suspension of research programme and resulted to death of researchers and research students.

Disruption of Research Programme

Insecurities problems in Nigeria seem to have affected the research programme of the various tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The research programme that is considered as one of the crucial programme of the tertiary institutions that is meant for finding solution to the pressing programme facing the nation it has been affected by insecurities challenges across Nigeria Ogunode, et al 2020a) noted that insecurity is a major problem affecting the administration of research programmes in the Nigerian public universities. Many research programme in the Nigerian public universities have been put to hold or stopped, especially in the universities in the Northern part of Nigeria because of the insecurity challenges leading to close of universities. Insecurity challenge facing the country according to Ogunode and Abubakar (2020); Manga (2020) and Manga (2019)is another challenge preventing effective administration and management of education and higher institutions in Nigeria. The insurgent in the Northern part of Nigeria have attacked many higher institutions disrupting their academic programme, killing students and destroying infrastructural facilities meant for teaching and learning. Insecurity in Nigeria and in the Northeast has done more damages to the educational infrastructural facilities. The insurgent has destroyed many school facilities from basic to higher education. Insecurity has contributed to poor deployment of ICT facilities and administration in the various educational institutions in the northern part of Nigeria. The insurgent kidnapped some lecturers and researchers on their way to survey an oil site in Borno state. A local media reported that lecturers were kidnapped by the Islamist militant group while on an oil exploration trip to Magumeri, in the Northeastern Borno State in July 2017, while the police officers were kidnapped in a raid on a convoy (Sources, Africa 2017). Insecurity problem is another big problem affecting the development of research programme in the Nigerian public universities. Another major challenge for research in Nigeria is insecurity (BB-www.projecttopics (undated). Researchers' inability to move freely within the country while carrying out research affects many researchers in Nigeria (OhiareUdebu& Ogunode, Rauf (2021); Ogunode, & Ahmed, 2022; Ogunode, &Ukozor 2022; BB-www.projecttopics).

Suspension of Research Programme

The continuous attacks on tertiary institutions across Nigeria has led to suspension of academic activities which directly affected the research programme of the various institutions.Onu, (2022)established that the insecurity has affected the movement of students, lecturers and researchers when he noted that "Apart from the University of Nigeria, which has some of its staff and students living inside the institution, all other tertiary institutions in the Southeast have their staff and students living off campus. This is why you cannot find anyone in any school on Mondays or any day IPOB may determine as sit-at-home day. This means that no teaching or learning takes place on these days. "Another evil this sit-at-home has brought upon us is that no conference or seminar holds anymore in the Southeast because of the fear of the attacks that might result from sit-at-home as reported by (Onu, 2022). Okeoma,(2021) and Sanni (2016) concluded that **t**hat insecurityis a major problem that has affected effective implementation of research

programme in the Nigerian higher institutions. They went further and submitted that many research programmesin the Nigerian public universities have been put to hold or stopped, especially in the universities in the Northern part of Nigeria because of the insecurity challenges leading to close of universities. Ogunode, Umeora, and Olatunde-Aiyedun, (2022); Ogunode, and Chijindu, (2022) asserted due to insecurities in some part of Nigeria, researchers and research students especially post-graduate cannot visit such communities to administer questionnaires. Ogunode, and Ade, (2023) and Echono, (n.d);Muhammed & Ogunode, 2022; Mbah, Egwu, &Emesini, 2018)noted that researchers, lecturers and students carrying out different researches in the south east zone havebeen forced to either suspend the research programme or abandon them because of insecurity problems.

Death of Researchers and Research Students

The problem of insecurities in Nigeria is not that it is only affected research programme but also has led to the kidnapping and killing of many researchers across different institutions in Nigeria.Ogunode, Okwelogu, Elechukwu and Yhaya (2021); Nnamdi, (2021); Ogunode (2020); Nwosu, Joseph, Chukwuka, and Ukwunna (2019) maintained that many researchers, academic staff and students have been kidnapped and killed by bandits in Northern part of Nigeria. Aljazeera.com (2021) reported that a 12-year-old conflict in northeast Nigeria has caused, directly and indirectly, the deaths of some 350,000 people, the vast majority of which are children below the age of five, the United Nations found in a new report. The death toll, given by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in a new study on the war and its effect on livelihoods published on Thursday, is 10 times higher than previous estimates of about 35,000 based only on those killed in fighting in Nigeria since violence broke out and this include researchers and research students. Adedigba (2018) quoted Nigeria's former Minister of Education, AdamuAdamu, who confirmed that 2295 teachers were killed in attacks by insurgents in the North-east. The former minister, who expressed concern over the systematic destruction targeted at education, observed that 2,295 teachers have been killed and 19,000 others displaced in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States in the last nine years and this included researchers. Also, Nejo (2021) noted that the Academic Staff Union of Secondary Schools has called for lasting solution to the insecurity across the country, particularly, incessant attacks on schools leading to killing and kidnapping of teachers and students for ransom; as well as the spate of assaults on teachers and researchers.ASUSS Central Working Committee lamented that the sordid scenarios were affecting Counsellors and teachers' productivity adversely and negatively impacting on education in the country.

Findings

The paper revealed that insecurity in Nigeria has significantly impacted the research programs of tertiary institutions. Specifically, the study found that ongoing insecurities have led to the suspension of research programs, as institutions struggle to maintain normal operations amid threats and disturbances. Additionally, the violence and unrest have resulted in tragic consequences, including the death of researchers and research students. These findings underscore the severe disruptions caused by insecurity, which not only hinder the progress of academic research but also pose grave risks to the lives of individuals involved in research activities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Research programs in tertiary institutions are crucial for addressing both national and international pressing problems, and they play a significant role in the social, economic, and technological advancement of a country. This paper examined the impact of insecurity on research programs within Nigerian tertiary institutions and found that insecurities have severely disrupted these programs. The study revealed that ongoing insecurity has led to the suspension of research activities and, in some tragic cases, the deaths of researchers and research students.

Based on these findings, the paper recommends that the government take proactive measures to address the underlying causes of insecurity, such as high unemployment rates. Additionally, there should be increased investment in the security sector to enhance overall safety and stability. Implementing artificial intelligence solutions in tertiary institutions is also recommended to support effective security management and improve the safety of research environments. These measures are essential to mitigate the adverse effects of insecurity on research programs and ensure the continued contribution of tertiary institutions to national and global advancements.

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