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Impact of Middle East Crisis on Programme Implementation in Public Tertiary Institutions in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined the relationship between the Middle East crisis and the implementation of teaching, research, and community service programmes in public tertiary institutions in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. Three null hypotheses guided the study. A descriptive survey design was adopted, with a sample size of 375 academic staff selected from three public tertiary institutions using stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between the Middle East crisis and the implementation of teaching, research, and community service programmes. The study concluded that global crises have far-reaching implications on higher education systems, particularly in developing economies like Nigeria. It was recommended that institutional managers and policymakers adopt adaptive strategies such as funding diversification and flexible academic planning to mitigate the adverse effects of global disruptions.

Keywords: Middle East crisis, teaching programme, research programme, community service, tertiary institutions, FCT Abuja.

1.0 Introduction

Tertiary institutions represent the highest level of formal education and include universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. They are established to perform three core functions: teaching, research, and community service. These institutions play a critical role in national development by producing skilled manpower, generating knowledge, and contributing to societal advancement. In Nigeria, tertiary institutions are central to human capital development and innovation, serving as engines for economic growth and social transformation [1]. The concept of tertiary education has been widely discussed in educational literature. It refers to post-secondary education designed to equip individuals with advanced knowledge and specialized skills necessary for professional practice and national development. Within the Nigerian context, tertiary institutions operate within a

dynamic socio-economic and political environment, making them susceptible to both internal and external influences, including global crises.

One such external factor is the Middle East crisis, which refers to ongoing geopolitical conflicts and tensions in the Middle East region, particularly involving countries such as Iran, Israel, and other Gulf states [2]. These conflicts often disrupt global oil supply chains, trigger energy price volatility, and create widespread economic uncertainty. The global economy is highly sensitive to developments in the Middle East due to the region's dominance in oil production and export. As a result, any instability in the region has ripple effects across countries that depend on oil either as exporters or importers. Recent studies and reports have shown that the Middle East crisis has significant implications for Nigeria's economy. A study by Unachukwu revealed that although Nigeria may experience short-term gains from increased oil prices, the overall impact of Middle East conflicts is largely negative due to inflationary pressures and economic instability. Similarly, a macroeconomic analysis reported that the effects of the crisis on Nigeria are transmitted through oil prices, exchange rate fluctuations, inflation, and capital flows, all of which influence national revenue and economic planning [3].

Further evidence indicates that rising oil prices resulting from Middle East tensions can simultaneously improve government revenue while increasing domestic fuel costs and inflation. This dual effect creates economic uncertainty and reduces purchasing power among citizens. Another report highlighted that global oil price shocks triggered by the crisis have far-reaching consequences, forcing governments worldwide to adopt emergency economic measures. Research on global oil markets shows that geopolitical conflicts in the Middle East lead to significant oil price volatility, exposing the vulnerability of global supply chains and increasing inflationary pressures across economies.

In the Nigerian context, the removal of fuel subsidies has further intensified the transmission of global oil price fluctuations into domestic fuel prices, making the economy more sensitive to external shocks. Despite these growing concerns, most existing studies have focused primarily on macroeconomic outcomes such as inflation, exchange rates, and government revenue, with limited attention given to the educational sector [4]. However, the education system, particularly tertiary institutions, is deeply connected to the national economy. Changes in funding, cost of living, and policy priorities resulting from global crises can significantly affect programme implementation in universities and other higher institutions. The justification for this study is therefore rooted in the need to bridge this gap in the literature. While several studies have examined the economic consequences of the Middle East crisis on Nigeria, there is limited empirical evidence on how such global disruptions affect the core functions of tertiary institutions—teaching, research, and community service. Given that tertiary institutions rely heavily on government funding and operate within the broader economic system, understanding this relationship is essential for effective policy formulation and institutional planning. Moreover, as global interdependence continues to increase, external shocks such as geopolitical conflicts are becoming more frequent and impactful. There is a need for context-specific research that explains how these global events translate into operational challenges within Nigerian tertiary institutions. This study is therefore timely and necessary, as it provides insights into the broader implications of the Middle East crisis on higher education in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja [5].

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study examined the relationship between the Middle East crisis and the implementation of teaching, research, and community service programmes in public tertiary institutions in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. The specific objective include;

1) to find out the impact of Middle East crisis on the implementation of teaching programme in public tertiary institutions in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria.

2) to find out the impact of Middle East crisis on the implementation of research programme in public tertiary institutions in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria [6].

3) to find out the impact of Middle East crisis on the implementation of community service programme in public tertiary institutions in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria.

1.3 Hypotheses

1) There is no significant relationship between Middle East crisis and implementation of teaching programme.

2) There is no significant relationship between Middle East crisis and implementation of research programme.

3) There is no significant relationship between Middle East crisis and implementation of community service programme.

2.0 Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design of correlational type. The design was considered appropriate because the study sought to establish the relationship between the Middle East crisis (independent variable) and programme implementation (dependent variables: teaching, research, and community service) without manipulating any variables. The correlational approach enabled the researcher to determine the strength and direction of relationships among the variables as they naturally occur. The study was conducted in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria, which hosts several public tertiary institutions. The FCT serves as an administrative and educational hub, making it suitable for examining how global crises affect institutional operations.

The population comprised all academic staff in three selected public tertiary institutions in FCT, Abuja. These institutions include a federal university, a polytechnic, and a college of education. Academic staff were targeted because they are directly involved in teaching, research, and community service functions. A sample size of 375 academic staff was selected for the study. The sample size was considered adequate based on standard sampling guidelines for survey research. A stratified random sampling technique was employed. First, the institutions were stratified by type (university, polytechnic, college of education). Secondly, faculties/schools within each institution were used as strata. Academic staff were then randomly selected proportionately from each stratum to ensure fair representation across disciplines and institutional categories.

Data were collected using a self-developed questionnaire titled: "Middle East Crisis and Programme Implementation Questionnaire (MECPIQ)". The instrument was divided into four sections: Section A: Demographic information. Section B: Items on Middle East crisis (economic disruptions, funding instability, global uncertainty). Section C: Teaching programme implementation. Section D: Research programme implementation. Section E: Community service programme implementation. The questionnaire was structured on a 4-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by three experts in educational management and measurement and evaluation. Their suggestions regarding clarity, relevance, and coverage were incorporated into the final version of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha method. A pilot test was conducted on 30 academic staff outside the study area. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.82, indicating that the instrument was highly reliable and suitable for the study. The researcher, with the help of trained research assistants, administered the

questionnaire directly to respondents. Out of 375 copies distributed, all were retrieved and found usable, representing a 100% return rate.

Data collected were analyzed using: Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to answer research questions. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test the hypotheses. The choice of PPMC was justified because. The study examined relationships between variables. The data were continuous and approximately normally distributed. It measures both strength and direction of relationships. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was; Reject the null hypothesis if $r_{\text{calculated}} > r_{\text{critical}}$ and Otherwise, do not reject the null hypothesis.

Results and Data Analysis

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between Middle East crisis and implementation of teaching programme.

Table 1. PPMC Analysis.

Variables	N	r-cal	r-critical	Decision
Middle East Crisis				
Teaching Programme Implementation	375	0.62	0.195	Reject H_0

Interpretation

The calculated r-value (0.62) is greater than the critical value (0.195), indicating a **significant positive relationship**. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between Middle East crisis and implementation of research programme.

Table 2. PPMC Analysis.

Variables	N	r-cal	r-critical	Decision
Middle East Crisis				
Research Programme Implementation	375	0.58	0.195	Reject H_0

Interpretation

The r-value (0.58) exceeds the critical value (0.195), showing a **significant relationship**. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between Middle East crisis and implementation of community service programme.

Table 3. PPMC Analysis.

Variables	N	r-cal	r-critical	Decision
Middle East Crisis				
Community Service Programme	375	0.54	0.195	Reject H_0

Interpretation

Since the calculated value (0.54) is greater than 0.195, there is a **significant relationship**. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Findings

The Findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between Middle East crisis and implementation of teaching programmes. There is a significant relationship between Middle East crisis and implementation of research programmes. There is a significant relationship between Middle East crisis and implementation of community service programmes [7], [8].

Discussion of Findings

The results of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the Middle East crisis and the implementation of teaching, research, and community service programmes in tertiary institutions in FCT, Abuja. These findings highlight the vulnerability of higher education systems to global geopolitical and economic disruptions. The finding on teaching programme implementation showed a strong positive relationship with the Middle East crisis. This suggests that global crises indirectly influence instructional delivery through economic instability, inflation, and disruptions in institutional planning [9], [10]. This result is consistent with World Bank and Dickson, which reported that global crises often lead to reduced education financing, disruptions in academic scheduling, and challenges in instructional delivery. Similarly, Reimers and Schleicher and **Kasimu, Lawan, Pajo**, and Okoh, emphasized that external shocks significantly affect teaching continuity, especially in countries with limited technological infrastructure [11].

The study also found a significant relationship between the Middle East crisis and research programme implementation. This implies that research activities in Nigerian tertiary institutions are sensitive to global developments [12], [13]. The finding supports Teferra and Kasimu, Lawan, Pajo, and Okoh, who observed that African universities depend heavily on international funding, collaborations, and grants, which are often disrupted during global crises. In the same vein, Altbach and Salmi noted that financial constraints arising from global instability reduce research productivity and limit access to international academic networks [14], [15].

The significant relationship between the Middle East crisis and community service programmes indicates that universities' engagement with their host communities is affected during periods of global uncertainty. Community service is often one of the first areas to experience neglect when institutions face financial and administrative pressures [16]. This finding aligns with Cloete et al, who argued that universities in developing countries tend to prioritize core survival functions such as teaching over outreach programmes during economic downturns [17].

The findings can be explained through systems theory, which views educational institutions as open systems influenced by external environments. Global crises such as conflicts in the Middle East affect oil prices, inflation rates, and government revenue in Nigeria, thereby impacting budgetary allocation to education. This chain reaction ultimately affects programme implementation in tertiary institutions [18], [19]. The findings demonstrate that the effects of global crises are not limited to economic or political domains but extend deeply into the educational sector [20], [21], [22]. The dependence of

Nigerian tertiary institutions on government funding and external support makes them particularly susceptible to such shocks.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study set out to examine the relationship between the Middle East crisis and the implementation of teaching, research, and community service programmes in public tertiary institutions in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. The findings clearly established that significant relationships exist between the Middle East crisis and all three core mandates of tertiary institutions. This indicates that global geopolitical disturbances, even when geographically distant, exert measurable influence on the functioning of higher education institutions in Nigeria.

The study demonstrates that tertiary institutions in the FCT operate within a broader global system and are therefore highly sensitive to international economic and political shocks. The Middle East crisis, through its effects on oil prices, inflation, foreign exchange fluctuations, and government revenue, indirectly constrains institutional funding and disrupts academic planning. These disruptions manifest in reduced efficiency in teaching delivery, declining research output, and weakened community engagement activities.

The findings reinforce the notion that Nigerian tertiary institutions are structurally vulnerable due to their heavy reliance on government funding and limited financial autonomy. When external crises affect national income and budgetary priorities, education funding often suffers, thereby affecting programme implementation. The study also underscores the interconnectedness between global stability and local educational development, highlighting that sustainable higher education requires resilience mechanisms that can withstand external shocks. In essence, the study concludes that the Middle East crisis is not merely a distant geopolitical issue but a significant external factor shaping the performance and effectiveness of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Addressing its impact requires both institutional adaptability and proactive policy interventions.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1) The government should prioritize and protect funding allocated to tertiary education, even during periods of economic instability. Establishing an education stabilization fund would help cushion institutions against external shocks caused by global crises. Tertiary institutions should reduce overdependence on government subventions by exploring alternative funding sources such as endowments, alumni contributions, international grants, consultancy services, and public-private partnerships. Financial diversification will enhance institutional resilience.

2) Universities and other tertiary institutions should be granted greater financial and administrative autonomy to enable them to respond swiftly and effectively to global disruptions. Autonomy will allow institutions to design context-specific strategies for sustaining programme implementation. Institutional administrators should develop flexible academic calendars and programme structures that can easily adapt to disruptions. This includes modular teaching approaches, hybrid learning systems, and contingency planning for crises.

3) There is a need for sustained investment in digital technologies to support teaching, research, and community service. E-learning platforms, virtual research collaboration tools, and digital outreach programmes can help maintain continuity during global disruptions. Institutions should strengthen local and regional research networks to reduce reliance on international partnerships that may be affected by global crises. Encouraging intra-African collaboration can sustain research productivity. Tertiary institutions should establish formal crisis management units responsible for risk assessment, preparedness, and response. These units should develop policies that ensure continuity of academic programmes during external shocks.

4) Regular training should be organized for academic staff on adaptive teaching methods, digital tools, and alternative research strategies. This will enhance their ability to cope with

disruptions caused by global crises. Institutions should redesign community service programmes to be more sustainable and less resource-dependent. Leveraging digital platforms and partnerships with local organizations can help maintain community engagement even during crises. Policymakers should integrate global risk considerations into national education planning. Long-term strategies should focus on building a resilient education system capable of withstanding international economic and political fluctuations.

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