

EFFECT OF INSECURITY ON CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA: NOW AND THE FUTURE

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Abstract

The fact that Nigeria is prone to innumerable acts of instability and terrorism, which have jeopardized the whole population's lives, is no longer news. The country has experienced the loss of lives and property due to the actions of Boko Haram, assassination, electoral violence, kidnapping and hostage-taking, and many other vices. The threat of vulnerability extends to the educational system as well. It is common knowledge that a supportive atmosphere is necessary for effective learning. But today, Nigeria's learning environment is no longer safe and secure, which has impacted how the country's secondary schools are implementing the curriculum. The government made frantic attempts to address these problems with insecurity in the nation but to no avail. Therefore, this study used Delta State as a case to empirically evaluate the impact of insecurity on curriculum implementation in secondary schools in Nigeria.

The validated questionnaire created for the study received responses from 240 (two hundred forty) male and female students. For the investigation, three (3) hypotheses were developed. To test the hypotheses, means and standard deviation were computed, and a t-test was performed. The execution of the curriculum was found to be significantly impacted by insecurity, which also impacted the pupils' academic achievement. Due to this, the nation's educational progress appears to be in very poor shape. It was suggested, among other things, that everyone should be concerned with school security if it must be attacked from all angles. The government and administration of schools were advised to install monitoring around schools to keep agitators away from the learning environment to keep schools safe for the future.

Keywords: Insecurity, Curriculum, Implementation, Secondary Schools

Introduction

In recent times, Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity that is almost grounding economic activities in the country. The treat of insecurity is a major issue for the government at all levels, which has prompted the government to allocate large national resources to security matters. To this, Eme and Anthony (2011), as quoted by Ademola (2013), reported that there is apparent anxiety in Nigeria and that lives are no more secure as security problems are the order of the day. This insecurity is of various types and kinds, such as kidnapping, assassination, Niger Delta Militancy, Oil Theft, Fulani Herdsmen Harassment, issue of Boko Haram in the North, and recently as Unknown Gun Men. Schools are shut down, lives are cut short, properties are squandered, and growth in all its forms is blocked (Abert, 2013). The question "can there be security?" puzzles everyone today, given persistent security issues and the government's inability to provide safety and security in the nation. Is it possible to provide security for people and property? (2013) Achumba, Ighomereho, and Akpor-Robaro Evidently, the security challenges in Nigeria seem difficult, or at least they have stayed that way, and many people feel that by failing to address the issue head-on, the government at all levels has not done enough. Some others claim that the issue has a political undertone and is intended to serve the self-interest of particular politicians. Because of this, the educational system in Nigeria has been severely undermined, frustrating students, instructors, and even the government. This has resulted in the decline of education. It is impossible to exaggerate the value of education to any nation's social and economic growth. Ojokwu (2017) reported that due to the significance of this issue, the Federal Republic of Nigeria's government declared in its 1999 constitution that every child in Nigeria has the right to education, regardless of gender, tribe, religion, or race. It is crucial to note that the high educational ideal outlined in the Federal Republic of Nigeria's constitution will be realised in a calm and supportive learning environment. The noble objective of education can never be fulfilled in a vacuum (Lahr, 2014). They can only be accomplished in a supportive and calm learning atmosphere. Students and instructors may be discouraged from achieving the declared goals and objectives of education if there is insecurity inside and outside the school setting.

Meaning of Curriculum

The word curriculum means a race track or course children or learners go through to become educated. In general, it refers to the content or subject matter of instruction. In contrast, in the formal sense, it refers to a set of centrally issued documents that define the overall goals and aims of instruction, specify the range of school subjects and the time allocated to them for different types of schools, and determine the specific tasks, content structure, objectives and methodological principles for each subject (Baller (1991) as quoted by Moemeke & Onyeagwu (2021). A curriculum is prescriptive and based on a more basic syllabus that only outlines the subjects that must be studied and how much detail to receive a certain grade. The curriculum encompasses all instruction planned and directed by the school, whether inside or outside the classroom, in groups or individually. (Kelly, 2003, as cited by Ahmadi and Lukman, 2015). In other words, the curriculum prescribes what we hope to accomplish in advance and how it should be done.

According to Blenkin (2012), a curriculum is a body of information, contents, or subjects that defines a method for imparting knowledge and skills to students throughout schooling.

In general, a curriculum is a structured schedule of lessons or subject matter that includes learning experiences and objectives to achieve those objectives. It serves as a means of training people (learners) to contribute positively to the society they belong to. Achuonye and Nyenwe (2013) defined a curriculum as an educational programme that promotes a society's ideas and values. This will allow society to accomplish its social, economic, and political objectives gradually. According to Gbamanja (2010), the curriculum consists of three parts, which are as follows:

Programme of activities includes all co-curricular and extracurricular activities that enhance learning, such as field trips, practicals, clubs, and societies. Programme of studies, which includes all courses taught in the classroom.

- Programme of advice/evaluation, which includes all initiatives aimed at determining how well students comprehend material, counselling, and guidance to support the student in obtaining the greatest possible education. The curriculum is an instrument for education aimed at humanising and educating the full person (Ahmadi and Lukman, 2015). Akinsola and Abe (2006) defined curriculum according to a modern understanding as all of the information and experiences a student gains within and outside the school's walls, regardless of when or where they occur.

Concept of Insecurity: The issue indicates a feeling or situation of insecurity. It is a complex idea that may be summed up as failing to safeguard people and property. It induces a feeling of fear or anxiety based on a perceived deficiency in safety or protection. In contrast, Onifode, Imhonoh, and Uorim (2013) conceive security as a state's relative capacity to fend off challenges to its citizens' rights and interests. Achumba, Ighomereho, and Akpor-Robaro (2013) defined insecurity as danger and exposure to risk or anxiety. An insecure individual perceives the world as a dangerous jungle, feels unsafe, unhappy, rejected, hostile, and pessimistic, exhibits tension, conflict, and guilt, and tends to be irrational and selfish, according to Abraham Maslow and Iyenger (1977), who was cited by Ojukwu (2017). Therefore, it would seem that a student studying in an environment marked by insecurity may experience social, mental, and emotional setbacks. It thus makes sense to state that these factors could affect the learner's behaviour and academic performance. Insecure school environments, together with deteriorating facilities and instructors who cannot acknowledge and accommodate children's emotional needs, result in unwarranted interference from the surrounding community. According to Ojukwu and Nwanna (2015), there is always segregation in the school community along religious, tribal, and sectarian lines because students may disobey teachers' instructions and challenge the teachers on particular concepts in an unsafe learning environment. Students intentionally destroy school property to express their displeasure with management choices. Many unpleasant attitudes present in an unsafe school environment, such as pupils arriving late, using cell phones, bad teaching, and other vices. All of the factors above can have a favourable or bad impact on teaching and learning, affecting how well

children achieve academically. Therefore, this study aims to provide potential solutions to the ongoing issues with students' academic performance that could result in a brighter future for the country.

Statement of the Problem

Recently, most people in Nigeria, including the government and the general public, have been lamenting the poor quality of the nation's educational system. The failure of Nigerian pupils, particularly in secondary schools, has been the subject of several theories from researchers and academics. They reported that presently, students of secondary schools lack the social, psychological, and academic skills to cope with the demands of the present societal needs. Many factors have been suggested for these failures. Amongst them are a lack of necessary learning materials, inadequate teachers, poor funding, and many others. However, they failed to examine the insecurity and its effect on the school environment and academic performance.

A report from Ojukwu and Nwanna (2015) states that since Nigeria's democracy in 1999, the issue of insecurity has become a major problem for the nation. The different media channels have published daily reports of kidnapping, terrorism, hired assassins, bombings, abductions, rape, cultic activities, and an upsurge in interethnic and intercommunal violence. In short, insecurity has crippled Nigeria's education system, where schooling has its fair share of challenges in most parts of the country.

For instance, N antisense's insecurity report between January and June 2021 (NST/CFR, 2021) showed 2,943 kidnapping cases in 181 days, with 5,800 deaths reported. Of this number, 1,137 came from Borno, 862 from Zamfara, and 715 from Kaduna states.

All of these have started to happen often and have severely impacted living in Nigeria. Many lives have been lost due to all these issues and other things. The academic environment in Nigeria has thus suffered casualties. Reports also show that many schools in the country are regularly attacked, and students are either killed or kidnapped. For instance, Lawal (2018) reported that Boko Haram in Yobe State abducted 110 Dapchi female pupils and kidnapped about 300 girls in a hostel at Chibok and many others that have become frequent.

To this, the main interest of this study is to investigate the effect of insecurity on school environments and the attendant effect on curriculum implementation in Nigerian secondary schools now and in the future of the nation's development. Investigating the impact of school environment insecurity is appropriate given the wide variety of repercussions of children's low academic performance and its concurrent social and debilitating emotional effects on the students and society at large concerning curriculum implementation as well as proffering possible solutions for a better academic performance by the students who benefit from adequate curriculum implementation to prepare them for the future.

Purpose of the Study

Since 1999, when Nigeria began its democratic journey, policymakers' inability to satisfy the country's national aspirations rendered it unpopular. Though there have been continuing efforts to improve the quality of the nation's educational system through formulating various educational policies, the issue of insecurity seems unstoppable. To this, the study is aimed at:

1. Ascertaining what constitutes insecurity in a school environment that could influence curriculum implementation.
2. Ascertaining the effect of insecure school environments on the student's academic performance.
3. Determining if there is a difference in students' academic performance in rural and urban schools due to insecurity.
4. Determining if a differential exists in the performance of males and females due to insecurity as it affects curriculum implementation.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were generated to guide the study:

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference between curriculum implementation and insecurity in the school environment.
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference between male and female academic performance as a result of insecurity in secondary schools
- Ho₃: There is no significant difference between the environment of insecurity of urban and rural secondary schools.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. Nwankwo (2011) claims that descriptive surveys seek to gather information from a specific sample of the population and likely identify certain qualities of the sample while also generalizing them to the full population. These have to go with the respondents' opinion, which the researcher has to seek. The study was carried out in Delta State secondary schools. In it, three schools were sampled from the state's three senatorial districts. The population for this study was 240 students made of 120 (one hundred and twenty) males and 120 (One hundred and twenty) females each from the three (3) Senatorial Districts of North, Central, and South in Delta State.

Instrument for Collection of Data

The instrument employed to collect data was a 25-item structured questionnaire. The questionnaire titled "Effect of insecurity on school curriculum implementation on academic performance" (EISCAP) was used. A four-point Likert method of scaling which includes strongly agreed (4), agree (3), disagreed (2), and strongly disagree (1). The questionnaire was made up of

three sections: (A) Demographic section, (B) Questions on insecurity, and (C) Questions on the relationship between insecurity and curriculum implementation. The measure of academic performance resulting from participating students' curriculum implementation was on mathematics and English subjects.

Validity of the Research Instruments

The questionnaires were given to three (3) specialists in the faculty of Education at Delta State University Abraka to validate. They confirmed the comprehensiveness and quality of the items as their contribution brought more value to the questionnaire.

Reliability: Fifty (50) SS1 students from the six schools were given the instrument to test its dependability. This particular set of pupils is not included in the current research. To assess the instrument's reliability, a four-week retest interval was used. The scores were correlated using the Kuder-Richardson formula of 20 (KR - 20) to compute the reliability coefficient, and the outcome produced a respectable value of $r = 0.72$. This showed that the tool was suitable for the investigation.

Administration of Instrument

The researcher personally visited the various schools to administer the questionnaire. They were briefed on the administration procedure. After that, the questionnaires were collected and scored after the allotted time.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, while a t-test was used to test the hypotheses. In the analysis, the “strongly agree” and agree were merged while strongly “disagree” and disagree were merged to “disagree”

Result

The results of the data collected were presented and interpreted in line with the research hypotheses that guided the study.

Table 1: Mean (\bar{x}) and Standard Deviation (SD) of the factors that constitute insecurity and its effect on curriculum implementation

S/NO	Insecurity factors	Mean (\bar{x})	SD
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1	There is inadequate security in our school as the school compound is not fenced	3.79	0.83
2	I have heard of kidnapping but never witnessed one	3.50	0.74
3	Students have been kidnapped in my school	2.60	0.72
4	There have been cases of violence and cult activities in my school	3.27	0.20
5	I have never suffered any form of bullying in my school	3.42	1.06
6	My school lacks enough qualified teachers	2.72	1.22
7	I sometimes hear gunshots within my school premises	3.40	0.74
8	I have not seen any student with a gun in my school	3.10	1.05
9	There has not been any form of violence on students and their properties	3.45	0.75
10	There have been reported cases of armed robbery in and around my school compound	3.03	0.62
11	I have not been sexually harassed or raped in the school by teachers or students	3.07	1.04
12	There has been poor policy implementation and policy inconsistency in my school	2.76	1.06
13	Some students are always creating problems in the school compound	3.66	0.93
14	Parents are always coming to my school to confront teachers for corporal punishment meted to their wards	3.30	0.75
15	There is inadequate infrastructure in my school	3.63	0.92

From the table above, the mean cut-off was 2.50, meaning that scores with a mean above 2.50 are accepted while those below 2.50 are rejected. Hence, responses were either accepted or rejected as an insecurity factor that may affect curriculum implementation.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) of the effect of insecurity on curriculum implementation as it affects students' academic performance.

S/NO	Effect of Insecurity on Students' Performance	Mean (\bar{x})	SD
1	There is high insecurity in my school	3.06	0.72
2	I have skipped school severally	2.87	0.86
3	Our teachers are most times absent from school	3.36	0.74
4	Students lose interest in academic activities as a result of insecurity	3.30	0.25
5	Students drop out of school as a result of poor performance	3.44	0.64
6	Students practice truancy, and this affects their academic performance	2.96	0.75
7	I should have performed better if my school is safe	3.16	0.61
8	Various lessons I missed affected my performance	3.56	0.62
9	I am not always attentive in class because of insecurity	3.57	0.60
10	I am not secure because of my teachers' harassment	3.06	0.58

Table 2 shows the effect of insecurity on curriculum implementation/performance of secondary school students, and this shows that as a result of perceived insecurity in the schools, students are afraid that they stay out of school. As a result of their skipping school, teachers' absence from school and others has affected their academic performance. The report that they perform better when their school is safe and when they did not miss school clarifies that students will perform better when they are safe and secure in the school.

The null hypothesis 2 states that there is no significant difference between male and female academic performance due to insecurity in secondary schools. This hypothesis was tested using the t-test; the result is below.

Table 3: Insecurity in schools and its effect on academic performance of male and female students.

Gender	N	M	SD	t_{cal}	t_{tab}	Remark
Male	120	14.28	2.42			Sign
Female	120	5.52	2.28	28.85*	1.960	

Significant: $p < .05$

The result from Table 3 shows both male and female students as t_{cal} 28.85. This shows a significant difference in academic performance between male and female students.

Report on the issue of urban and rural schools, hypothesis three states: There is no significant difference between the insecurity of urban and rural schools. A t-test analysis was used, as reported in Table 4 below:

Table 4: T-test report on the difference in insecurity and curriculum implementation between schools of urban and rural areas in Delta State.

Location of school	N	M	SD	t_{cal}	t_{tab}	Remark
Urban	120	12.88	2.93			Sign
Rural	120	6.70	2.19	18.51*	1.960	

Significant $P < .05$

The result from Table 4 with a t_{cal} value of 18.51 is greater than the t_{tab} value of 1.960. This showed that there is a significant differential effect of insecurity on curriculum implementation between urban and rural secondary schools

Discussion of Results

The respondent's responses to the research questions above, as reflected in Table 1, shows that following all the items about factors that constitute insecurity and its effect on curriculum implementation, there is the revelation that insecurity in schools significantly affects the academic performance of secondary schools in Delta State. In line with these findings, Chidobi and Okenwa (2015) maintained that education is a universal aspiration and also an instrument of development and social integration; hence, it is through effective management of education that a country possesses national security, economic security, energy security, environment security, etc. The process through which all the importance of the elements described may have an impact on a student's academic achievement cannot be overstated because the objectives of good education cannot be fulfilled in a vacuum. If there is a sense of unease within and outside of the school, both instructors and pupils are likely to feel fearful, which might prevent the execution of the school curriculum as laid out in the school programme. They would be accomplished in a conducive and tranquil school environment. In addition, a situation where parents harass and embarrass teachers in schools will affect students' academic performance because no teacher would want to work in a tense situation. To this, Bala (2010) remarked that students who study in a conducive environment for teaching can only be imagined.

Other findings revealed that as students are afraid and skip school, feel insecure, drop out, etc., these affect their lessons, resulting in poor performance. This data supports Nwangwa's (2014) observation that female staff members and students occasionally report being raped or abducted due to school insecurity, which causes them to drop out of school. Findings also show a considerable variation in school insecurity between urban and rural communities. Urban schools experience more widespread insecurity than schools in rural regions.

On a final note, results showed that insecurity in the school significantly affects the implementation of the curriculum, which results in the academic performance of male and female students. The t-test analysis in Table 3 shows a significant difference between the mean perception scores of male and female students regarding academic performance due to insecurity. Girls also usually suffer more from emotional trauma and depression due to failure than boys. They also suffer from sexual harassment from their teachers and fellow students. All the above are issues affecting the Nigerian educational system, which is supposed to be an instrument for national security and sustainable development.

Conclusion

Education of any nation is a sensitive sector that should be taken care of because of its role in advancing and developing other sectors. The result of this study calls for more research regarding insecurity and its effect on students' academic performance. Reports show poor academic performance has been attributed to insecurity and other factors. It is known that in any nation where education is shaky and unstable, its products will undoubtedly be the same because you can't give what you don't have. Different administrations have tried their best to better the education sector by fighting insecurity, but it seems not to have produced the desired result. However, in more search for the reason for the poor academic performance of Nigerian secondary school students, researchers have found that many other factors affect students' academic performance. Hence, more efforts should be made to make the education system an instrument for development and to end societal insecurity. To this, the study investigated the effect of insecurity on curriculum implementation as it affects secondary school student's academic performance as they prepare for the future.

Recommendations

Education plays a vital role in the development of a nation, especially when it is well-managed. The safety of schools in Nigeria from attacks depends on various stakeholders' collective efforts to support a safe school initiative from all fronts. Therefore, Collaborative efforts should be directed toward providing an environment conducive to our schools.

The following suggestions are made in response to this:

- All important stakeholders (law enforcement agencies) should collaborate and establish effective working relationships to promote a safe school environment.

- There is a need for concerted efforts by stakeholders in education to create security awareness and orientation aimed at sensitising the general public.
- To help law enforcement agencies handle the current insecurity needs, the government should increase their funding and provide them more authority.
- Schools should be walled in and secured to deter trespassers since doing so may give pupils a sense of security.
- Staff and students must be well-informed and have national intelligence about security issues in and out of their schools.
- Installation of closed circuit (CCTV) cameras by the school management. This will help monitor students, staff, visitors, and all other movements within the school environment.
- Death penalty for kidnapping should be enacted to deter people from going into kidnapping, and this should be implemented adequately.
- The government should address the issue of certain factors like poverty, injustice, nepotism, marginalization, and corruption, amongst many others.

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