

IMPACT OF SECURITY CHALLENGES ON ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of security challenges on access to quality education in Nigeria. The study follows the qualitative research methodology approach with emphasis on content analysis of extant literature. The findings from reviewed literature indicated that the most common security challenges confronting access to quality education in Nigeria include farmers and herdsmen conflicts, attacks by unknown gunmen, insurgency, kidnapping and ritual killings among others. The study revealed that the causes of insecurity challenges in Nigeria cut across economic-socio-cultural, political, institutional and governance related. It was revealed that the impact of security challenges on access to quality education in Nigeria include loss of lives of parents, students and teachers, internal displacement of families, disruption of academic calendar due to school closure, loss of confidence on the value of education, destruction of school infrastructure and teaching materials and increased in the cost of running schools by the government, especially in a situation where schools destroyed are to be renovated or rebuild. The study therefore concluded that security challenges have impacted negative on access to quality education in Nigeria. Government should implement result-oriented anti-poverty policies so as to address economic challenges such as youth unemployment and household poverty that could lead to security challenges and limit access to quality education. The paper also advocated for the need for value and ethical re-orientation to curb the menace of ritual killings, kidnapping, unknown-gunmen attacks and others security challenges that constitute threats to quality education; there is need for ethnic and political tolerance to addressing herders-farmers conflicts and politically motivated security challenges, and relevant institutions and security agencies should discharge their constitutional duties effectively and transparently to limit insecurity.

Keywords: Security, Security Challenges, Access, Quality Education, Lances of Literature

Introduction

Education is considered a major asset a nation can leverage upon on its journey towards achieving sustainable growth and development. Education trains the mind and changes the thinking and orientation of people and the place of a country in the comity of Nations. Lehr (2014) stated that the noble goals of education can never be achieved in a vacuum. They would be achieved under a conducive and peaceful atmosphere. That is to say, education sharpens beliefs and moral values in the society. It goes beyond literacy alone because for an individual, education means the provision of opportunity for him to realize his potentials, goals, and abilities in life. Therefore, an educated society can better position itself socially, economically and politically than a society where majority of its citizens are uneducated. Sadiq (2013) asserted that an educated population is an asset to a nation due to the fact that education promotes national security as it inculcates desirable human traits like honesty, sincerity, hard work, punctuality, productivity, innovation, patriotism, selflessness, brotherhood and friendship among others.

Security guarantees peaceful atmosphere for the conduct of all human activities, including impartation of knowledge which is the primary purpose of education. Education is designed purposely to assist individuals to develop their skills and abilities so as to fulfil their potential and to lead productive satisfying lives (Gulesh, Al-Hassan & Aledare, 2022). The importance of education has been adequately discussed in many fora and in different literatures. Schools and academic institutions have become soft targets, not only for the purpose of vandalising infrastructure, but commoditizing human beings for exchange for ransom and use as human shield (Agerholm, 2016). Atakpo (2020) noted that all these incidences also result in psychological trauma and health related challenges because many children in the attacked area are always anxious, uncertain, apprehensive have sleepless nights and are sometimes taking to displaced peoples camp to take refuge and retirement and relocation of teachers to areas not prone to attacks. Albert (2003) observed that lives are no more secured, security problems are the order of the day, these range from assassination, electoral violence, youth militancy in Niger-Delta, oil theft, kidnapping and hostage taking and crisis to Boko haram crisis in the North. Akinsowon (2021) noted that insecurity which has come in different forms as Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen, armed banditry and kidnapping are bruising more fears to the life of the common people. Nigeria is not an exception, thus Section 14 (2) (b) of the Nigerian 1999 constitution states clearly that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the government”. Government on this constitutional responsibility has failed to provide a secured and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of business and economic activities. The alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria has increased the crime rate and terrorists’ attacks in different parts of the country, leaving unpalatable consequences for the nation’s economy and business growth (Ifeoma, 2015). Adegami (2013) stated that the series of bombings and killings in the north; kidnapping and armed robbery attack in the south; political and economic related assassinations as well as the politically- influenced communal wars has become a multi-hydra headed monster which security agents in Nigeria appear incapable of handling.

Bakari (2021) pointed out that in Nigeria, security challenges such as militancy, insurgency, banditry and terrorism have become common issues in different parts of the country as attacks on people, property and government infrastructures constitute threat to social services like education. It could be deduced from literature that acts of insecurity bedeviling this country have become worrisome as they are gradually destroying public confidence in the nation’s security system and their negative impact of education cut across the students, school infrastructures, teachers, management, government, households, policy implementation and a host of other variables that play significant role in promoting access to, and quality in education system. This also means that their parents are left with no option than to transfer their students or pupils to schools in places they considered safe or where they have moved to, permanently, or temporally. The concern is that the extent of the impact of security challenge on education may differ among countries.

Statement of the Problem

The role of education in propelling growth and development in any nation, Nigeria inclusive, cannot be over-emphasize. Consequently, its quality is an important factor that needs to be considered by policy makers and other critical stakeholders. This however could influence the extent to which the teaching and learning activity is carried out in a safe and secured environment. The widespread insecurity in Nigeria predisposes schools and institutions of learning to constant attacks and other acts of insecurity. Security lapses and challenges certainly do manifest on a daily basis in schools in Nigeria. The security challenges range from youth restiveness, terrorism and insurgent attacks, kidnappings and hostage-takings for monetary

ransoms, political assassinations, arsons, murders, cult-related activities, mass protests and so forth. Kidnapping as a security challenge is seen as a lucrative business, and income generating job by some dubious and criminally minded persons. Some of these people claimed that despite their academic qualifications and skills acquired, they lack paid jobs to meet with their needs, they engage in some illegal acts like kidnapping and ritual killings among others. It is assumed that these security issues have a lot of negative implications to the quality of teaching and learning process in Nigerian school system (Campbell, 2021).

Akanji, Badmus and Kolade (2017) noted that government at all levels have introduced different measures that aimed at curbing the security challenges confronting the Nation. The Federal Government for instance said that they have spent a lot on the procurement of military and other security equipment, and has also employed more security and paramilitary officers. In States like Kano, the Hisbah, a local security network has been introduced to complement the role of the conventional security operatives and in Plateau State, the operation Rainbow was introduced by the Jonah David Jang Regime all with the aim of addressing the security challenges that have negative impact on access to quality education in the country. Similarly, at the community level, hunters, community vigilantes and Neighbourhood Watch are among local security architecture that have been introduced as ways of addressing security challenges in different parts of the country. Despite these efforts, it appears as if security challenges in the country are on the increasing looking at the increasing cases of attacks, kidnapping and ritual killings in different parts of the country where teachers, students, parents and lecturers are the victims of these security threats. If these challenges are allowed to continue, access to quality education may be affected.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of insecurity challenges on quality education in Nigeria through the lances of literature. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. To find out the factors responsible for security challenges in Nigeria
- ii. To identify some common forms of security challenges in Nigeria
- iii. To find out the perceived impacts of security challenges on access to quality education in Nigeria

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What are the factors responsible for security challenges in Nigeria?
- ii. What are some of the common forms of security challenges in Nigeria?
- iii. What are the perceived impacts of security challenges on access to quality education in Nigeria?

Concept of Security

Security is the existence of conditions within which people in a society can go about their normal daily activities without any threats to their lives or properties. The security of the leaner and those engage in imparting and managing the teaching learning process is of utmost importance if the desired result as far as quality assurance in early childhood education programme is to be achieved in developing countries like Nigeria. Shuaibu (2015) noted that a safe school is one that fosters peaceful, positive or cordial relationships among students, teachers and administrators. The inability to satisfy the need for security may cause stress in individuals and hinder them from pursuing higher level needs.

The rising security challenges seem to have contributed in increasing the cost of schooling and education in Nigeria. Those who hold this view alleged that most times when people are either kidnapped, ransom are paid to get the victims released. And when schools are burnt or vandalized by attackers, renovating the affected schools usually limit financial resources that could be channel to teacher training and the provision of other teaching and learning materials needed for quality education. Charles-Zalakoro, Oko-jaja, Osusu and Affen (2019) reported that the attack and kidnapping of over 250 teenagers in Chibok 2014, the attack on Mubi Polytechnics in 2012 when several students were selected, identified and killed, the Ado Bayero University attacks also in 2012 and kidnapping of school children in Lagos 2017 were some of the typical and unsavory incidents of attacks on places of learning in Nigeria. Campbell (2021) asserted that monies going into billions have been paid by families, school authorities and government as ransom.

Ogunleye, Adewale, Alese and Ogunde (2011) asserted that security embraces all measures designed to protect and safeguard the citizenry and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses and the nation against sabotage or violent occurrence. They stated further that security embraces all measures designed to protect and safeguard the citizenry and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses and the nation against sabotage or violent occurrence.

Achimba and Ighomereho (2013) postulated that security is the stability and continuity of livelihood (stable and steady income) predictability of daily life (knowing what to expect) and freedom from psychological harm (safety or protection from emotional stress) which result from the assurance or knowing what one is wanted, accepted, loved and protected in one's community or neighborhood and by people around. Hence, Eme (2011) described insecurity as a breach of peace and security whether historical, ethno-religious, civil, political and psychological that have contributed to prevalent conflicts the country has witnessed over the years, resulting to war and destruction and loss of lives and properties, in which the education sector has not been left untouched. Audu, Lukeman and Mohammed (2014) viewed security as any mechanism devised to alleviate the most serious threats that prevent people from pursuing their cherished values. The added also that security is considered as any mechanism deliberately fashioned to alleviate the most serious and immediate threats that prevent people from pursuing their cherished values. Stakeholders in the education sector have recently found themselves in a dilemma on how to find solutions to incessant killings, kidnappings, abductions, destruction of schools and infrastructure by criminal gangs and insurgents.

Security also means the defence and protection of values acquired; it has to do with freedom from danger or threat to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values, legitimate interests and enhance the wellbeing of its people. The absence of security breeds insecurity which is considered a new and dangers development that have characterized the Nigerian State. Omorogbe (2016) maintained that the insecurity in the country possessed the capacity to drastically reduce the performance, aims and objectives of the education system and if not checked may totally destroy the education sector in the country.

Factors Responsible for Security Challenges in Nigeria

Security challenges bedeviling Nigeria, though much more intense now than before, have been attributed to avoidable factors. These factors could be categorized into economic, political, socio-cultural, governance and institutional issues among others. The economic dimension to security challenges has to do with the increasing challenge of unemployment, poverty, inflation and income inequality that breeds the feeling of exclusion and marginalization that trigger insecurity. The traditional value system of the Nigerian society is characterized by endearing features such as the spirit of collectivism, loyalty to

authority and community, truthfulness, honesty, hard work, tolerance, love for others, mutual harmony and coexistence, and unity. It is also worthy to note that in years past, issues such as ritual killings or human organ harvesting which seems to be common in some communities these days were seen as acts of abomination that attracts very serious punishment if caught. These cherished values which made society secured and safe have all gradually been thrown away and lost. New values have taken over their place over the years, with the so-called 'modernity and advent of technology, a situation that has increased the spate of insecurity in communities and schools in different parts of the country. The increasing rates of moral decadence and decay in traditional values and cultural beliefs that were seen as the basis for uniting people in different communities have also contributed in raising the tempo of insecurity in Nigeria. Nigeria's core values of hard work, dignity of labour, religious tolerance, integrity, social justice, patriotism and discipline that should guide the way and manner individuals and communities relate are no longer cherished.

Politically, the journey in Nigeria has not been smooth as elections and electioneering processes have been characterized by violence and their attendant effects on schooling in affected communities. Insecurity challenges in form of violence during elections have led to the killings and destruction of properties, including learning institutions. Uzuegbu-Wilson (2020) argued that pre-dispositional factors contributing to the attacks directed on schools are linked to the emergence of domestic terrorism, but that school administrators, staff, parents and students have critical roles to play in supporting safe school initiative.

It has been argued in extant literature also that bad governance and the failure on the part of relevant institutions, especially the security architecture to decisively and sincerely deal with perceived entrepreneurs of insecurity and their foot soldiers constitute serious drivers of security challenges that tend to limit access to quality education in Nigeria. Nadabo (2013) maintained that bad leadership, corruption, and illiteracy among others are factors breeding insecurity in Nigeria. Abiodun, Omolayo, Tomisin and Chinedu (2020) rightly pointed out that failure on the part of government to adequately protect schools coupled with the unconducive learning environment the students are exposed to have made schools prone to insecurity challenges. This also implies that failure on the part of early childhood school proprietors or owners to take appropriate security measures to safeguard their schools, especially in insecurity prone communities have contributed to making these schools unsafe for teaching and learning.

Some Common Security Challenges in Nigeria

In years past, the relationship between herdsmen and farmers in different parts of Nigeria, especially in the Middle-Belt and the far North was cordial and respected by all. Things seem to have fallen apart as there is increasing challenge of insecurity as this hitherto cordial relation is now a shadow of its former self. Herdsmen attribute the roots of the crisis to religious differences resulting in the killing of their cows while the farmers see the herdsmen as a threat to their crops and agricultural produce since the herdsmen allow their cows to feed on the farmer's crops (Ajibefun, 2017). The deadly crisis between herdsmen and crop farmers have become one of the major insecurity problems in Nigeria. This has triggered increasing disputes over land and water use with central Nigeria's growing populations of sedentary crop farmers (Agboola, 2020).

Insurgency is also security issue that tend to have affected the education system in most developing countries. Abang (2015) stated that insurgent activities include guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and political mobilization to weaken government control of the state and also challenge their legitimacy. Obiechina (2018) stated that herdsmen have sacked whole communities, abducted elder statesmen, burnt churches, killed church priests and other worshipers, killed police officers, raped, looted and perpetrated heinous crimes while the

government has done less to arrest the situation, which is a serious threat to national security and national development. Omorogbe (2016), the failure of government to address the situation of herdsmen attacks decisively has several implications for Nigeria. The fact that herdsmen now carry sophisticated ammunition with which they kill and main perceived opponents at will constitutes graves danger to national security. Adesula (2019) argued that this is because security personnel including the police have not been able to withstand weapon-wielding herdsmen's boldness and firepower. The Fulani herdsmen attacks have adversely affected the economy of Nigeria generally.

Timeline of Security Challenges on Education in Nigeria

Increasing challenges have impacted a lot on the education system in Nigeria. Boko Haram insurgency has been the greatest challenge to internal security in the North-East, North-West and North-Central from 2009 till date. Evidence from literature revealed that some students, teachers and parents who coincidentally are direct stakeholders of the education system have lost their lives due to insecurity issues. Adesula (2019) also reported that about 2,295 teachers have been killed and 19,000 others displaced in Bornu, Yobe and Adamawa States between 2009 to 2018, while an estimate of 1,500 schools had been destroyed since 2014, with over 1,280 casualties among teachers and students.

On the 19th of February 2018, about 111 school girls from the Government Girls Science and Technical College Dapchi, Yobe State were abducted. Even though most of the girls have been released, this particular case showed failure of the existing security architecture to proactively secure the volatile area as Dapchi which is very close to Chibok in the north-eastern part of Nigeria (Nwosu, Ukwunna, Ebokaiwe & Ukwunna, 2019). These attacks attributed to the rising spate of insecurity in the country indicate vulnerability of schools which may escalate further into a bigger security and education challenge if not arrested.

Concepts of Education and Quality Education

Education is necessary in the development of the individual and society. Education brings peace and development; it helps to develop the inbuilt potentials that nature has deposited in man. Osaai (2016) posited that education can be viewed as a process of developing and transmitting the culture of a people from generation towards achieving the goal of good life and behaviour in an individual. Education is the process for transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth and for disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or guarantee rational direction of the society or both. Education therefore acts as a leeway to equip the citizenry with the required knowledge, values, skills and attitude to build a united, strong and an egalitarian society.

Joshua, Ibietan and Azuh (2016) defined education as a process by which individuals are assisted formally through proper direction and guidance to develop their capacities not only for their own benefit but for the society at large. It plays a critical role in changing the behavioural patterns of citizens to the desired direction. This means education is the process of self-realization by way of acquiring the right skill, attitudes, values and knowledge that are supposed to be learned in a systematic and well-organized environment where issues of insecurity do not exist. It creates selfless individuals to the society.

The quality of education has been one of the most debated issues in the world, partly because it determines how much and how well children learn and the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social and developmental benefits. Agnihotri (2016) stated that a quality education is defined by five elements: the learner's outside experiences, learning environment, content of education, learning processes, and education

outcomes. This means for quality education to exist, learners must be healthy, well-nourished and supported by their families and communities.

Impact of Security Challenges on Access to Quality Education in Nigeria

Security challenges experienced in different communities in Nigeria have significantly made schooling at all levels, extremely difficult and expensive. These issues have not just made communities unsafe, they have directly and indirectly limited access to education, as there are reported incidences where children have fallen victims of the dastardly acts. Insecurity in Nigerian schools and institutions of learning results from external incursion by terrorists, kidnappers and bandits thereby leaving management, parents and guardians helpless (Atanda, 2013). Schools attacked are not also excluded from the effect of the crippling security challenges that threaten the security and unity of the Nigerian state in general (Uzuegbu-Wilson, 2022). Kagwiria and Amukowa (2013) pointed that the declining quality of education at all level is also directly or indirectly linked to the critical security challenges that certainly have made schools vulnerable to attacks in Nigeria.

Human Right Watch (2016) reported that with the emergence of democratic rule in Nigeria, Boko Haram has become intensely more violent and abusive with devastating consequences for school-age children. This means that security challenges can impinge on all spectrums of education and national life. It is worthy of note that, societies that place high premium on security are educationally more advanced and developed. Thus, insecurity usually brings about unpleasant and frustrating impact on the pupils/students and parents as well as other members of the family. As a matter of fact, physical school closure due to insecurity challenges may negatively affect students' learning in the following ways; less time will be spent in learning, stress symptoms emerge, insecurity leads to a change in the way pupils interact, and limit motivation to learning. This suggests that the physical closure of schools due to security challenges no doubt has significant negative multiplier effects on school calendar and the quality of education that pupils received even if those schools are re-opened for academic activities. Obiechina, Abraham and Nwogu (2018) found that school environmental insecurity disrupts effective teaching and learning and also important school activities which somewhat affects teachers' level of productivity.

Conclusion

The issue of security is a concern of every stakeholders in the education sector. The review of literature indicated that the most common security challenges confronting access to quality education in Nigeria include farmers and herdsmen conflicts, attacks by unknown gunmen, insurgency, kidnapping and ritual killing among others. The study revealed that the causes of insecurity challenges in Nigeria cut across economic-socio-cultural, political, institutional and governance related. It was revealed that the impact of security challenges on access to quality education in Nigeria include loss of lives of parents, students and teachers, internal displacement of families, disruption of academic calendar due to school closure, loss of confidence on the value of education, destruction of school infrastructure and teaching materials and increased in the cost of running schools by the government, especially in a situation where schools destroyed are to be rebuilt. The study therefore concluded that security challenges have impacted negatively on access to quality education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The followings have been recommended as ways of curbing security challenges that could hinder access to quality education in Nigeria among others:

- i. Government should implement result-oriented policies that can help in addressing economic challenges of household poverty that could lead to security challenges that tend to limit access to quality education in Nigeria.
- ii. There is need for value and ethical re-orientation to address the increasing challenges of kidnapping, ritual killings, unknown gunmen attacks and other unethical behaviours that tend to limit access to quality education in Nigeria.
- iii. There is need for political and ethnic tolerance so that the menace of other ethnic and politically motivated acts like electoral violence and herders-farmers conflicts that could lead to security challenges can be tackled headlong.
- iv. Institutions and security agencies involved in fighting insecurity should discharge their constitutional duties effectively and transparently so as to curb security challenges and their attendant consequences on access to quality education in Nigeria.
- v. There is need for good governance so that issues such as the winners get all syndrome, feeling of marginalization, nepotism and other acts of corruption triggering security challenges can be addressed.

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