

Addressing the Security Challenges In Nigerian Tertiary Institutions: The Role of Stakeholders

By

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Abstract

*No nation can attain development in all ramifications in the absence of peace, justice and security. The level of insecurity challenges in Nigeria has assumed an alarming dimension that requires the involvement of everyone. The impact of insecurity in Nigeria to tertiary institutions and indeed other similar sectors cannot be overestimated. The paper discusses the contemporary security challenges in Nigeria, causes of insecurity in Nigeria which include poor leadership, corruption, illegal arms importation, ethno-religious crises, emergence of ethnic militia groups, and corruption among others. The link between insecurity and education system was highlighted, followed by the role of stakeholders in addressing security challenges in Nigerian tertiary institutions encompassing the proprietors, institutional administrators, staff, parent and students. The paper finally recommended that all critical stakeholders must be committed in discharging their roles and responsibilities, work together effectively with law enforcement agencies toward addressing the security challenges in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. **Keywords:** Security, Challenges, Tertiary Institutions, Stakeholders*

Introduction

Security lapses and challenges certainly do manifest on a daily basis in Nigeria. Such challenges ranges 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. Such challenges cut across all facets of life including the education system. The noble goals of education can never be achieved in a vacuum. They would be achieved under a conducive and peaceful atmosphere. Tertiary education being the bedrock of the national development, all stakeholders at this level of education including the proprietors, institutional managers, staff, parents and students have very good roles to play in addressing the security challenges.

Conceptual Framework

Security

The term security is used in different ways in different contexts. Security may be conceived as protection from danger, violence, fear, and want that impair, or capable of impairing the full development and existential wellbeing of citizens. Security implies the absence of fear and want. Until recently, security was conceived in both academic literature and government policies in narrow and state-centric terms as the protection of a nation from foreign aggression and internal insurrection.

To some scholars, the term security seems to place emphasis on absence of threat to acquire values or tendencies that would undermine national cohesion and peace as criteria for determining what security connotes (Davies, 2016). Security is the condition or feeling of safety from harm or danger, the defence, protection and the absence of threats to acquire values (Igbuzor, 2011).

In the opinion of Omorogbe, (2016) security is perceived as a basic human need that contributes to effective teaching and learning. According to hierarchy of needs by Abraham Maslow, the lower needs of man like food, shelter and security must be met before other higher needs like education or intellectual/cognitive needs. When one is unable to achieve these basic needs, it may result to stress in individuals and hinder them from pursuing higher needs. Security as it were, is a feeling of safety and protection. It is also viewed as freedom from danger and protection from physical harm and injuries. He added 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. Hence this paper will serve as advocate for peace and absence of insecurity and conflict in the Nigerian education system, particularly the tertiary education (Omorogbe, 2016).

Henceforth Wulf, (2016) 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.

Therefore, security being the most basic need of human beings and societies; recognizing the significance of security as the precondition for the survival of the Nigerian people and nation,

the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999 as amended) section 14 (1) (b) that —*the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government*ll. The duty conferred on the government by this provision has not been substantially and substantively discharged as the prevailing high level of human insecurity in the country demonstrates. Consequently educational institutions suffer from that insecurity in the nation.

Tertiary Education

In most parts of the developing world, education is seen as playing an indispensable role in national economic development and cultivating the necessary civic values for societal and political participation. The object of analysis usually concentrated on the way in which governments could utilise national higher education system to train people in the skills necessary for economic growth (Chapman, 2002).

According to Escrigas, (2008) Tertiary Education or Higher education plays a necessary and an increasingly important role in human, social, and economic development. The role of Higher Education Institutions in development is not only vital, but is also complex, fluid and dynamic. Tertiary Institutions exhibit numerous capabilities and scope and can affect processes of development both directly and indirectly through teaching, research and service. Furthermore, Tertiary Institutions operate within different contexts in which they can play different roles towards societal development. In this context, Tertiary Institutions include a wide variety of universities, vocational and technical colleges, amongst other formal, non-formal, and informal institutions.

In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (2013:39) section 5.80 described tertiary education —as the education given after Post- Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and InterUniversity Centres such as Nigeria French Language Village (Lagos), Nigeria Arabic

Language Village (Gambori Ngala), National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institute (NTI)ll.

Nigerian Tertiary Educational Institutions are established with the primary purpose of giving the students a sound and qualitative education so as to be able to function effectively in any area they find themselves so as to be productive in society. In addition, it would make them to

be able to achieve self-fulfilment and attain self actualization (Iyoha, et'al, 2010). In this paper therefore, tertiary education connotes Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Monotechnics and other skills and training Centres.

Goals of Tertiary Education

The Goals of Tertiary Education shall be to:

- a. Contribute to national development through high level manpower training ;
- b. Provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians.
- c. Provide high quality career counselling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work;
- d. Reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market;
- e. Promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service.
- f. Forge and cement national unity; and
- g. Promote national and international understanding and interaction.

Most of the Nigeria tertiary institutions are finding it pretty difficult to actualize these goals due to the incessant insecurity in the Nigerian state. Under the present insecurity situation in the country effective teaching and learning cannot be realizable. According to Eme, (2021)

Stakeholders in Tertiary Education.

The term Stakeholder in education according to Great Schools Partnership (2014) refers to —anyone who is invested in the welfare and success of a school and its students, including administrators, teachers/staff members, students, parents/community members, local business leaders, and elected officials such as school board members, local and state representatives. The Students are concerned because their knowledge and skills acquisition and the quality of their subsequent lives and careers are at stake. Teachers have a stake because of their understandings of their students, their professional practice and knowledge, their perceptions of themselves as teachers, and the quality of their work life and standing in the community. Parents clearly have an investment in their children's learning, well-being, and educational future. The government/public invests money in education, infant is an investment for the future, and has a stake in maintaining the quality of that investment. The stewardship of the

investment involves administrators and policymakers. Stakeholders certainly play very vital role in the security and safety of schools and the provision of quality education remains a huge burden which —requires the participation of all stakeholders, in a democratic societyll.

In the light of the above therefore, stakeholders in education refers to all group of people and agencies that have say in the education system at a particular level and place. In this context the stakeholders in tertiary education include, proprietors, institutional managers/administrators, staff members, staff Unions, parents/community members and students,

Contemporary Security Challenges in Nigeria

It is a well known fact that, the main task ahead of all tiers of governments in Nigeria is the protection of lives and properties of the citizens. However, the increase in the rate of bandits attacks, kidnapping s, cultism, religious crises, farmers herdsmen clashes, communal crises, political thugery, cybercrime, strikes/protests by trade Unions and students, etc revealed the forms and state of insecurity in Nigeria.

Nigeria has six (6) geo-political zones. The nature of insecurity takes various forms in different parts of these geo-political zones. Sabo (2022) posited that in the South-south, the fear of kidnapping for ransom had become an order of the day, title holders, professionals and oil expatriates are also not spared from this saga. In the South-west armed robbery, cultism and kidnapping have gained ground. In the North-west, cases of cattle rustling, abduction and kidnapping and rural banditry become very common. The North-central seems not to be spared from the endemic insecurity hence the region has become the battle field between farmers and herdsmen clashes. The North-east has been a theatre of war for over a decade as a result of Boko Haram insurgency in which thousands of lives were lost and over a million people displaced from their towns and villages. The South-eastern region is not in exception and not safe for anybody including the Igbos, activities of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Eastern Security Network (ESN) among other regional/ethnic groups have made the area sleepless and sometimes enforce stay at home order.

These among other security challenges across Nigeria have placed the nation at high risk, the result of this cut across all facets of life education inclusive. In tertiary institutions in Nigeria a part from the above mentioned challenges, the issues of mismanagement of resources by the top management crew, corruption in academia including sexual harassment, extortions and

exploitation of students by the staff, misunderstanding between the institutional managers and staff unions, series of strikes by staff unions, struggle for freedom and rights by students leading to protest, and riots, cultism and ethno-religious crises are seen as the most common contemporary security challenges in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria (Muhammad 2022).

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

To many people, the daunting security challenges in Nigeria are due to varied reasons and circumstances. The problems of kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, insurgency among other related evils, the perpetrators of these heinous crimes in the Country, always attribute their actions to penury and unemployment. Olamosu (2016) is of the opinion that most insecurity issues in Nigeria are as a result of lapses from the part of security agencies while Abubakar (2015) opines that failure of the government to provide or manage the human needs for their citizens, ethnic disagreements and national resources contentions are some of the factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria.

Udoh (2015) is of the view that insecurity in Nigeria is caused by porous borders, illegal arms importation and proliferation, ethnicity, emergence of ethnic militia groups, corruption, and weak judicial system. Nadabo (2018) sees bad leadership, illiteracy and lack of security equipments as the main cause agents of insecurity.

Politics of bitterness in which ascendance to political power look at it as do-or-die affair; this invariably leads to political thuggery and insecurity (odidi, 2014). Akintokumbo (2017) links insecurity in Nigeria to massive and unchecked corruption, greed, selfishness, lack of patriotism, lack of political will and conscience as well as lack of vision and purpose. Other factors that cause insecurity in Nigeria include; inequalities/unfairness, ethno-religious conflicts, lack of basic necessities, loss of socio-cultural and communal value system, unemployment, corruption and poverty King (2016). The above mentioned factors are catalyst or part and parcel of security challenges in Nigeria; drastic measures need to be taken to tackle the situation.

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. Some of these challenges outlined by (Phenson, Ojie, Esin & Atai, 2014, p.3) are also directly or indirectly linked to the

critical security challenges that certainly have made schools vulnerable to attacks in Nigeria.

They are:

- a) Inadequacies in manpower recruitment and training of security forces and law enforcement agencies.
 - b) Lack of timely and promptness in the handling of security issues by government.
 - c) Lack of citizen's involvement in state security management.
 - d) Low standard of security awareness.
 - e) Reluctance by citizens to volunteer security information to law enforcement agencies.
 - f) Lack of effective coordination and harnessing of human material and technical resources.
 - g) Lack of effective security networking between security and law enforcement agencies.
 - h) Lack of security personnel's self-control and discipline.
 - i) Lack of secrecy and porous security network.
 - j) Non-adherence to document security classifications and violation of oaths of secrecy
- Acts in security and government departments in Nigeria.

Link between Insecurity and Education System

Education is described by the National Policy on Education (2013) as —an instrument per excellence for effective national development. This means that education is the most powerful weapon for the development of any nation. However, education cannot be acquired if there is no peace and stability. According to Olamosu (2000), insecurity is a threat to the organization/society/system education at all levels inclusive. State of insecurity undermines the education sector, internal cohesion and corporate existence of the state and its abilities (Okehe, 2011).

Security lapses and challenges certainly do manifest on a daily basis in Nigeria. Such challenges ranges from —terrorism and insurgent attacks, kidnappings and hostage-takings for monetary ransoms, political assassination, murders, cult-related activities, mass protests and so forth (Phenson, Ojie , Esin & Atai,2014,p.1). However in the wake of Boko Haram insurgency and the subsequent launching of attacks on schools, suicide attacks, bombings, shooting at sight, abductions and hostage taking have taken prominence and have remained issues of serious security concern.

While many have fallen victims to any of the dangers aforementioned, very few have actually escaped death or injury during such attacks. In the prevailing circumstances, the safety and security of school administrators, teachers and students and entire community where the

schools are located are no longer guaranteed; most especially in the North-east geo-political zone where the activities of Boko Haram insurgents are much pronounced.

The inaccessibility of schools as a result of the inherent dangers therefore remains a serious challenge to the knowledge givers, the learners and also other critical stakeholders. In most schools attacked, the traumatic experience alone cannot easily be erased as such experience instils fear on the teachers and the students alike and make it very difficult for them to return back to school. More so, the —planning , organizing, coordinating, financing and evaluating of all educational activities on students, teachers and school heads in the schools attacked are often jeopardized while teaching and learning processes hindered because the schools environment are unsafe and learning can't be properly conducted and coordinated in an unsafe school environment (Olowoselu, Bello & Onuselogu, 2014,p.81).

In view of the above mentioned challenges facing many educational institutions in Nigeria, this paper mainly focused on the role played by critical stakeholders in the security and safety of tertiary educational institutions. Stakeholders particularly referred to in this paper are the proprietors, institutional managers, staff (teaching and non-teaching staff and security officers) and their Unions, parents and students.

The Role of Stakeholders in Addressing Security Challenges in Tertiary Institutions

Security challenges in tertiary institutions can only be addressed if all stakeholders at this level will put all their hands on dec, meaning that they should perform all their roles and responsibilities in curbing the aforementioned challenges.

1. Proprietors

A proprietor is the owner of the school and schools are either owned by government through the relevant agencies while private schools are owned by private organizations or individuals with a governing board or management committees saddled with the responsibility of formulating policy and making decisions for schools on behalf of the board (Onyechere, 2014). They are therefore primarily responsible for the safety of schools. In accordance with the report released by the Global Business Coalition for Education based on the best global practice in the protection of schools, some school level interventions measures can be initiated by stakeholders in the overall interest of ensuring safety in our institutions of learning. This falls under the expected roles and responsibilities of proprietors of schools as outlined by (Fleet, 2015) below:

- Reinforcement of School Infrastructural facilities: including the provision of boundary walls and/or the installation of barbed wire in order to thwart attacks or any form of abductions at schools.
- Provision of Armed Guards in Schools: In liaison with the relevant law enforcement agencies, for the purpose of either repelling attacks or intimidating likely attackers.

Providing Security Awareness Training for all Staff: The aim is to help them recognize warning signals and alerting local and law enforcement authorities.

Apart from the above listed roles and responsibilities of proprietors (Onyechere, 2014, p.55) outlined the roles and responsibilities of proprietors worthy of emphasis which includes:

- Ensuring the comprehensive implementation of policy guidelines monitoring mechanisms that relate to the security and safety of both staff and students.
- Proprietor must make provision for adequate financial resources to effectively cater for the security needs of schools.
- Prioritizing upgrade of security measures on a regular basis in response to the dynamic nature of the emerging challenges to insecurity.
- Proprietors must ensure that schools are located not in secluded environment or with adequate provisions.

2. Institutional Managers

The head of tertiary institutions (Vice-chancellors, Provosts, Rectors, Directors, etc) are the Chief Executive, Administrative and Accounting Officers in their respective institutions; they are therefore saddled with the responsibility of controlling and coordinating the all affairs of their territory. Being the administrators, they are expected to take some of the responsibilities and roles of parents in ensuring safety of the students under their care. As presiding officers responsible for the managerial and administrative duties required for the day to day running of the school, the Administrator remains the —defacto Chief Security Officer| of the school (Onyechere,2014,p.24). The primary role and responsibility of Institutional Managers/Administrators is to engage in comprehensive collaboration with critical stakeholders such as law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations/non-governmental organizations, international partner agencies and donor agencies, community leaders, vigilante groups, religious leaders, parents and students, to eliminate risk associated with targeted attacks or other security challenges.

Core roles and responsibilities of administrators are comprehensively documented by (Onyechere,2014,pp.24-37).These are summarized below in relation to the subject matter of discourse:

- a) Institutional Managers should practice an open door policy and wider consultations to their staff, Unions and Students on security matters and other dealings.
- b) Administrators should play active role in the development and maintenance of physical infrastructure that can assure safety and security of staff and students.
- c) Institutional Administrators should shun the attitude that —it can't happen in this institution and ensure that an Emergency Response Team (ERT) are maintained.
- d) Institutional Managers should determine the type of security equipment required by the institution while regular drills and exercises should be conducted with the aim of testing the efficacies of plans, policies and equipments.
- a) Safety policies should be articulated in collaboration with the institutions Chief security officers of the institution and communicate such to critical stake holders which include parents, teachers and students.
- b) Background checks for all categories of staff should be done for security reasons before they are employed. This is to ensure that competent, skilled, healthy and psychologically balanced staff members are employed.
- c) Administrators should ensure that information of —sensitive security issues are released to staff, parents and other stakeholders on the need to know basis.
- d) Accurate records of staff and students and its update must be maintained and safely kept. Regular safety and security awareness training should be maintained for staff and students on a regular basis.
- e) Ensure that school drivers are trained on defensive driving technique while Chief Security Officers must be made to undergo training on a regular basis in order to keep abreast with the recent security issues.
- f) Ensure that effective identification system and processes are designed and installed to be able to readily sport out intruders. In the case of law enforcement agents, effort should be made to always ensure that claims of identity are promptly verified with the relevant agencies.
- g) Administrators should actively be involved in neighbourhood watch or community policing initiative while also maintaining links with emergency management agencies.

- h) Administrators should ensure that vaults and safes are maintained for keeping sensitive records intact. They should also ensure that school security devices are properly serviced and test run and always inspected on a regular basis.
- i) Administrators should ensure that parking spaces are marked out and secured within the school premises. All abandoned vehicles shall be removed.

In summary, administrators should ensure that security needs of schools are provided at all times. For example, if proper security measures, staffing needs and requirements were provided and surveillance activities complemented by law enforcement in view of Administrators should always seek for professional help when the need arises and get experts to train their security staff on procedures for handling serious security matters.

3. Staff

Lecturers/Teachers/Instructors, non-academic staff (security personnel inclusive) must realize that security remains a collective responsibility of all. They should therefore have greater roles to play in contributing to the safety and security of their institutions. All staff must be actively involved in training exercises meant to keep abreast with security tips and strategies. The roles and responsibilities that all levels of staff can partake in relation to their area of duty gleaned from the studies conducted by (Nzewi, 2014; Xaba, 2014; Alimba,2018) which are summarized below:

- a) Suspicious vehicles and persons around school buildings including those taking photographs or videotaping, and suspicious packages must be promptly reported. Individuals seeking suspicious information must be properly identified and also handed over to the appropriate authority.
- a) Access control measures must be put in place. The security officers in the entry and exit points should reduce the number of doors/gates accessible from the outside to one designated entrance while also ensuring security of emergency exit routes..
- b) Physical security measures should deter an intruder from entering the premises. The parking lots in and outside their premises must be properly supervised and monitored.
- c) Vehicles movements must be properly registered and inspections of the school building should be done by trained personnel and any suspicious packages and items found in school compound must be reported and properly handled.

- d) Staff members should be involved in the training procedures for handling bomb threats, hostage situations, and kidnappings, chemical and biological terrorism. They should be involved in teaching students security approaches and awareness.
- e) Staff members should never hesitate to get in touch with professionals when in doubt of any security procedures.
- f) Security personnel should be knowledgeable in the use of security technologies to prevent and reduce violence, crimes, and risks in order to promote security and safety. Such security technologies include CCTV surveillance system, protective lighting, alarm, security gate e.t.c, most especially in areas where insurgents are operating.
- g) Synergy must be maintained between the institutions security personnel and other law enforcement agencies posted to their place by effectively applying and harnessing the critical elements of security (Phenson, Ojie , Esin & Atai 2014).

4. Parents/Community Members

Parents and other members of the community are also part of the decision making in education and should be actively involved in keeping school safe by mobilizing them as a cohesive uniform force to direct their efforts towards ensuring the safety of their wards from any attack and also safety of the community in general. The roles and responsibilities of parents in this direction as deduced from the report of the Global Business Coalition for Education and summarized by (Fleet, 2015) are:

- a) Engagement in Community Education Committees: Parents as community members no doubt are knowledgeable and conversant with the context and conflict dynamics resulting to any form of insecurity in the schools and Colleges. There should be committees that will serve as intermediaries between the community and the school management on safe school initiative projects.
- b) Engagement in Teacher-Student-Parent Consultative and Defence Units: In order to protect education, parents have a great role to play in fostering the creation of such units. Parents can through this unit warn stakeholders on emerging security issues.
- c) Parents also have the role and responsibility to facilitate the involvement of religious leaders in the promotion of education which no doubt will significantly impact in reducing attacks on schools and other security vices.

Aside from the above stated roles and responsibilities, parents should also demonstrate an interest in the welfare and safety of their children's lives. Parents should be conversant with safety and security procedures and also help to inculcate same to their ward. They should always ensure that they know their children's friends and they should know and monitor their activities and where about when they are not in school. This will eventually help in addressing the problems of kidnapping, drug abuse, among others.

5. Students

According to (Onyechere, 2014) the responsibilities of students in a school setting are ultimately linked to the students —action of omission or commission. He emphasized that students should avoid the attitude that —it can't happen but rather take up certain roles and responsibility to ensure their safety at all times. The tips include - being alert at all times, prompt reporting, strict adherence to general safety and security protocols both in the day and in the night, responding to alarm systems and participation in emergency drills and exercises. Other roles and responsibilities of students also worthy of note include the following:

- a) Students are expected to follow strictly the school laid down preventive policies and strategic security guidelines with regards to their safety.
- b) They are also expected to work with the institution managers, teachers and security personnels to create the safest and timely ways to report threats.
- c) Students should know who to go to with vital information or observations about potential threats.
- d) Students should confide with their parents, teachers and other trusted adults about issues relating to security and safety of their immediate environment.
- e) Student should report any suspicious persons, vehicles or motor bikes parked in an unusual spot within and outside the premises of their institutions.
- f) Students are to participate in any on-going activities or initiatives that promote school safety.
- g) Students should speak out and refuse to join groups or cliques who are engaged in negative behaviours or attitudes.

Abiding by the above stated points of action from the part of the students will help drastically in curbing the menace of security challenges in our tertiary institutions of learning.

Conclusion

The high level of insecurity in Nigeria has become a social problem and a hydra-headed monster that cannot be over-emphasized because of its far-reaching implications and direct consequences on education in particular, the economy and society in general. Most worrisome is the emerging new forms of insecurity challenges in contemporary Nigeria which have taken a disturbing dimension to the extent that it has almost crippled the various sectors, especially the education sector in Nigeria. Tertiary Educational Institutions are established with the primary purpose of giving the students a sound and qualitative education so as to be able to function effectively in any area they find themselves so as to be productive in society. The purpose of education cannot be achieved in a condition that is characterized with insecurity and violence. The safety of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria is dependent on the collective effort of various stakeholders in supporting a safer environment for learning. Collaborative effort should therefore be directed towards providing a conducive environment in all our Tertiary Educational Institutions.

Recommendations

In the light of the above discussions and conclusions, the paper therefore recommends that:

1. Government at all levels should consider security matters with topmost priority as enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
2. Security awareness and orientation aimed at sensitizing the public need to be taken as topmost priority by the relevant agencies of government and all stakeholders as well.
3. All critical stakeholders of tertiary institutions of learning and law enforcement agencies should collaborate and establish an effective working relationship for the purpose of addressing security challenges and promote peace and stability.
4. Institutional Managers should adopt crime prevention through environmental design strategies with the incorporation of information communication technology (ICT) and detection devices in the overall security architecture of their institutions.
5. All critical stakeholders mentioned in this study must ensure that they do not relegate their roles and responsibilities. They must be actively involved in ensuring that they all contribute towards combating the spate of all violence and other insecurity challenges.

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