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CHILD EDUCATION: A SURE WAY OF AVERTING INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigerian children are facing problems in their educational career due to their parents' inability to take care of them because of their separation as husband and wife, and the ineffectiveness of Nigerian government. The major hindrance of child education in Nigeria is uncontrollable corruption that is rampant among Nigerian leaders. This is strongly affecting the standard of education across the nation and is the major cause of insecurity in the land. Therefore, this paper examined the relationship between child education and insecurity in Nigeria. The paper delved into the contributory factors of insecurity in Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted for the study. One hundred and fifteen (115) respondents were randomly selected across the six geo-political zones in the country. The selection was done through the distribution of the research instrument, questionnaire, titled "Child Education and Insecurity Assessment Scale (CEIAS)". The instrument was designed by the researcher, and constructed on a 4-point Likert scale format. Data obtained for the study were analysed using the descriptive statistics of frequency counts, simple percentage sand means. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the formulated hypotheses. The study revealed inadequate child education as the root cause of insecurity and; significant relationship between inefficacious education and insecurity associated with penury, unemployment, corruption, kidnapping and insurgency in Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, accordance of child education priority in the national budget, and creation of effective database in Nigeria among others are recommended.

Key words: Child**,** Education, Insecurity, Nigeria.

Introduction

It is the parents' duty to educate their children by giving them sound and useful education which is better than acquiring property and estates that usually cause a rift after the parents' death. Many parents are conscious of their children's education and they pay more attention to their children's education while some are not really concerned at all about their children's education. Since no one can deny the utility and importance of knowledge as the gateway to success in life, it is obligatory for parents to give a sound and useful education to their children which are their foremost responsibility. Sound education, good health, ethics, and morals will definitely produce the prosperous nation of tomorrow and the new generation. In school, children's character and behaviour should be examined and watched carefully and vigilantly by their respective teachers and lecturers. All bad

characteristics, idiosyncrasies, attitudes, and wild behaviour that are not promptly corrected and changed from childhood will reflect on the nation in the future because the children of today are the future of the nation (Sadiq, 2018).

The deteriorating security situation in Nigeria is worrisome. Recently, Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented level of insecurity ranging from inter-communal and inter-ethnic clashes; religious violence; armed robbery; assassination, kidnapping and "boko haram" insurgency (Mutiullah cited in Abubakar, 2021). Insecurity in Nigeria is causing developmental challenges such as endemic penury, high rate of unemployment, inured corruption, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, large domestic debt, and rising external debt profile (Ewetan, 2018). This incident has posed a severe threat to socio-economic development in the country in that it stifles business and economic activities and discourages local and foreign investors (Ewetan & Urhie, 2019).

In a bid to tackle this phenomenon, the Federal Government has for some years now been allocating huge portion of the national budget to security, and in 2011 the Anti-Terrorism Act was equally enacted by the National Assembly (Ewetan, 2016). The Act seeks to provide for measures for the prevention, prohibition and combating of acts of terrorism, the financing of terrorism in Nigeria and prescribes penalties for violating any of its provisions (Oyebode, 2018). In addition, the federal government has embarked on fundamental surveillance, investigation of criminal related offences, heightening of physical security measures around the country aimed at deterring or disrupting potential attacks, strengthening of security agencies through the provision of security facilities and the development and broadcast of security tips in mass media (King, 2017).

In spite of these steps, Nigeria cannot be wholly ranked among the secured places for business and leisure activities in the world. Researchers and scholars have been searching into the causes and remedies to this menace with little or no success. The present study is therefore an assessment of the role of child education as a panacea to the problems of insecurity in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the purpose of this study is to:

i. Assess the causes of insecurity in Nigeria.
ii. Assess the child education and insecurity problems in Nigeria.
iii. Examine the importance of child education to Nigeria security.

Research Questions

These research questions were formulated to guide the study

i. What are the causes of insecurity in Nigeria?

ii. What are child education and insecurity problems in Nigeria?
iii. What are the importance of child education to Nigeria security?

Review of Related Literature

Child Education

Child education encompasses of all forms of education, both formal and informal, provided to young children. This education is fundamental to the development of a child and can significantly shape the later years of child's life. Digging deeper, there are several different facets that all combine to contribute to a child's early education. In terms of informal education, the primary source of input when it comes to a child's development is, of course, their relationship between parents or primary caregivers and teacher. In essence, parents can be considered to be a child's first teacher. This relationship is especially critical between 0-2 years of age as the child begins to develop sense of self and establishes an attachment with their parents. The quality of the attachment formed at this stage of life can have a significant impact on a child's future education. The other part of the equation when it comes to early childhood education is the formal education that the child receives at a young age. This stage of education typically spans years 2 to 8 of a child's life. There can be a variety of formats in which a child receives formal education at a young age, which can vary from state to state and program to program. Educational programs may be designed specifically for children at each individual age and can be provided in settings including childcare, daycare, nursery school, preschool, and kindergarten. Some of these programs are privately run, while others are operated by a local school system or under a federally funded program.

Importance of Child Education

It is fundamental to human and national development. Basic education brings growth and development to the young ones and improves their capacity as well as their morals, attitudes and how they relate to those around them. Every child is entitled to have a qualitative and sound education for a more promising prospect. Child education in Nigeria provides a strong footing for their development. It helps to build a child's cognitive, physical, social and emotional proficiency which will prepare them for life challenges. At an early age, children are curious to learn. Education brings self-discipline to a child, a sense of responsibility, team-work among children and prevents them from feeling social insecurity. It helps guaranteeing promoting being self-confident and a good decision-making. Hence, every child must be educated so that they can lead a happy life. What are the benefits of early childhood education in Nigeria? A lot of parents in Nigeria are not aware of the benefits of early childhood education to their children. Some do not even see the need for enrolling their children in preschool or kindergarten, as they do not consider this level of learning to be important. This is a wrong notion, as early

childhood education is vital to the growth and development of the child as stated below:

Improved Social Skills

Young children love to play and communicate with their mates, and the preschool environment gives them the opportunity to do just that. Besides, the environment enables children to acquire vital skills that allow them to listen to one another, express ideas, make friends, and collaborate. Giving young children early childhood education in Nigeria helps them to learn how to manage challenges and build resilience in times of difficulty. You will find that students who begin school from the preschool settle easily at the institution and they acquire a long-term interest in learning different things, including music, drama, singing etc.

Boost Self-Confidence

Through interactions with other children and teachers, children develop a positive mindset and perception of themselves. A child at three years, when compared to other children who might be older, will display a level of boldness and articulation this is as a result of teaching early childhood education.

Enhanced Attention Span

Young children always find it difficult to pay attention in the classroom, the length of time during which preschool children concentrates has always been a concern for educators and teachers. Nevertheless, if young children are taught early in Nigeria at a tender age, this will help enhance their attention span.

Hindrances of Child Education in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the children collectively encounter educational problems because of inadequate and insufficient materials and lack of sound educational planning nationally. Nigeria is a country where intelligent people across the nation can make drastic changes in child education. However, many educated Nigerians are teaching and working in other countries around the world. But her citizens are still suffering from lack of basic and adequate physical and instructional facilities. There are a lot of hindrances in Nigeria education system such as teachers and lecturers, and non-academicians' strike that have gravely affected the life of many students across the nation. The reason is that the strike subjects the victim students to spend more than reasonable and rational years for the registered program. Lack of adequate and sufficient facilities is another obstacle obstructing and confronting students insert learning in Nigeria such as enough accommodation, class and lecture room, and modern technology and well equipped laboratory for the students. Poverty and lack of seriousness of students also contribute to the Nigerian education hindrances while the major problem is the rate of corruption in the Ministry of Education that has great negative impact on the low standard of education across the nation (Otite, 2018).

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

In recent times, this country has suffered plaques of crisis, each leading to loss of lives and destruction of property. The insecurity crisis in Nigeria include kidnapping, armed robbery, and insurgency among others. Perpetrators of these heinous crimes in the country, always attribute their actions to penury and unemployment. Otite (2018) submits that the state of insecurity in Nigeria could be attributed to security lapses on the part of security agents. Abubakar (2015) pinpoints failure of government to provide or manage the basic human needs of their citizens, ethnic disagreements, and national resource contentions as 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, proliferation of illegal arms, ethnicity, emergence of ethnic militia groups, corruption, marginalization, poor leadership, religious fanaticism/extremism, and unemployment. In the same vein, Olawale (2016) pinpoints unemployment, imbalanced development, corruption, weak judicial system, and porous coastal borders as causes of insecurity in Nigeria. Nadabo (2019) sees bad leadership, corruption, and illiteracy among other factors breeding insecurity in Nigeria. Odidi (2018) points to politics of bitterness in which ascendance to political power is seen as a do-or-die business. This invariably leads to political thuggery and insecurity.

Akintokunbo (2017) links insecurity in Nigeria to massive and unchecked corruption, greed, selfishness, lack of patriotism, lack of political will and conscience, and of course, lack of vision and purpose. King (2016) states the causes of insecurity in Nigeria to include a combination of the following factors: lack of institutional capacity, lack of basic necessities, pervasive material inequalities and unfairness, ethno-religious conflicts, weak security system, loss of socio-cultural and communal value system, porous borders, rural/urban drift, anti-social and irresponsible companies, unemployment, and poverty.

There is no doubt that the above mentioned factors have correlation with state of education in the country.

Child Education and Insecurity Problems in Nigeria

Dambazau (2017) quoting Act 26 of 1948 on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, sees education as not only a public good, it is also a human right that is essential for the exercise of all other human rights, especially in promoting individual freedom and empowerment. Zukang cited in Dambazau (2017) links education acquisition of genuine wealth and happiness whereas lack of it exacerbates one's level of ignorance and leads to blunders, poverty, unhappiness, and sometimes the commission of crimes. To him, the relationship between lack of education, poverty and poor health conditions diminishes opportunities to social and economic advancement which often leads to criminality. Education is also essential in the military and para-military organizations which include the police that is

saddled with the security of the nation. Dambazau (2017) stresses that education is used more as a strategic tool for advancement of technology needed for nation's economic and socio-cultural development. In the military, it helps the armed forces to appraise situations; to estimate the battlefield; to examine the courses of action; to interpret the international environment; to project future warfare and design the battlefield; and requirement to analyze security threats. Education in the military is not all about warfare, it also contributes to national development, and at the same time enhances national security.

Dike (2018) submits that the socio-political and economic development of a nation and or her health is in many ways determined by the quality and level of educational attainment of the population. He, however, laments that the state of education in Nigeria cannot produce the critical and creative minds Nigeria needs to guide and manage democratic system and survive as a viable nation. Lack of quality education and unemployment in Nigeria would contribute to many social ills, including crime, prostitution, and the breakdown of law and order. He suggested that education in Nigeria should be treated as a public-health issue, thus:

> ..... *without treating education as a public-health issue that requires serious attention, the youths will continue to receive inferior education; they will continue to suffer mass unemployment and armed robbery will continue to rise; the society will continue to have illiterates and mediocre as political leaders; the society will continue to have political parties without ideology, and Nigeria will continue to fall behind economically, socially and politically.*

From the foregoing, it is neither exaggeration nor understatement to say that the higher a nation attains education, the stronger the nation's security. Hence, education contributes to the security of the nation.

Nexus between Education and Security

In securing lives and property of every nation, education is an essential tool. Sadiq (2018) asserts 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, friendship, etc. It also empowers people by inculcating life-long skills and know-how thereby liberating the individual from poverty and want. In a similarly vein, Fahd al-Qudah cited in Ekpo and Is'haq (2017) submits that:

> *if a nation is successful in developing (educating) its people as strong and complete individuals, it will be able to realize a glorious future for herself, promote peace within her boundary and defend her sovereignty. However, if a nation fails to develop (educate) its citizenry and makes them deficient in*

> *carrying out some of the activities of life effectively, then that nation is doomed to weakness, destruction and obscurity.*

In addition, Jonathan (2016) stresses the relationship between education, poverty and security, as he pointed that top ten most literate nations in the world are at peace, while almost all of the top 10 least literate nations in the world are in a state of either outright war or general insecurity. Lower education levels are linked to poverty and poverty is one of the chief causative factors of crime whether it is terrorism or militancy or felonies. To Jonathan, counter insurgency strategies are short term tools for securing a nation from insecurity while education provides a long term solution.

Malala (2016) submits that eradicating global terrorism goes beyond proliferation and development of guns and drones, rather spreading quality education across the globe irrespective of regions and culture because "through wars and weapons we can only kill terrorists - but this ideology of terrorism can only be ended through education", hence, swapping of textbooks and other educational materials for drones and guns (Malala cited in Jayalakshmi, 2016). Malala also submit that education is key to global security, therefore, there is need for change in policies in every nation of the world to cater holistically for education of every citizen which in turn could enhance tolerance, patience, love for each other, and friendship and harmony in society.

It could be concluded that sustainable global security can only be achieved when education is made a priority by states and their institutions. When properly realized, education can be a global asset to fight poverty, inequality, insecurity, and disease (Al-Rodhan, 2017).

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for the study, the population of the study comprised of 30455582 primary school pupils in Nigeria (Source: World Bank collection of development indicators, 2021). A sample of 115 pupils (62 male and 53 female) was drawn through stratified random sampling technique since the entire population of the study could not be studied. One hundred and fifteen (115) primary school pupils form the respondents, they were randomly selected across the six geo-political zones in the country. The selection was done through the distribution of the research instrument, questionnaire, titled "Child Education and Insecurity Assessment Scale (CEIAS)". The instrument was designed by the researchers, and constructed on a 4-point Likert scale format. Response options in instrument include: Strongly Agree (SA), 4 points; Agree (A), 3 points; Disagree (D), 2 points; and Strongly Disagree (SD), 1 point. As the scale is 4-point, mean rating to each of the items which is greater than or equal to 2.5 is regarded as "Agreed", while mean

rating lower than 2.5 is regarded as "Disagreed. This is obtained by adding the rating points (4+3+2+1), and then divided it with the numbers of options (4).
Data obtained were analysed using the descriptive statistics of frequency counts, simple percentage and means. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the formulated hypotheses. Data analysis was carried out on MS Excel, SPSS 17 and STATA 13.

Data Presentation and Analysis
Demographic Data
Table 1: Gender and Age of the Respondents

Gender/Age	below 20	21 – 30	31 – 40	41 – 50	51 and above	**Total**
Male	1	34	20	6	1	**62**
Female	5	29	16	2	1	**53**
Total	**6**	**63**	**36**	**8**	**2**	**115**

Source: Field Survey, 2023
Gender and age of the respondents were presented on Table 1 above; the respondents consisted of sixty-two (62) males and fifty-three (53) females. Only six (6) respondents were below 20 years; sixty-three (63) were between the ages of 21 and 30; thirty-six (36) were between the ages of 31 and 40; eight (8) were between the ages of 41 and 50; while only two (2) respondents were more than 50 years.

Questionnaire Data
Table 2: Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

Variable	**Frequency**	**Rank**
Ineffective child education	107	1st
Unemployment	103	2nd
Corruption	100	3rd
Poverty	95	4th
Poor security infrastructures	94	5th
Mismanagement of national resources	90	6th
Selfishness/unpatriotism	87	7th
High rate of illiteracy	86	8th
Poor information and communication technology	79	9th
Inadequate database	79	10th
Under funding of the security agencies	70	11th

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Respondents' opinions on the factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria were presented on Table 2. Ineffective child education is the leading factor responsible for insecurity syndrome in Nigeria followed by unemployment, corruption, poverty,

poor security infrastructure, mismanagement of national resources, selfishness, high rate of illiteracy, poor information and communication technology, inadequate database and under funding of the security agencies in Nigeria. These are graphically presented on Figure 1:

Table 3: Child Education and Insecurity in Nigeria

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Child Education is ill equipped in Nigeria	28	55	20	12	**2.86**
2	Most graduates are industrious and productive	16	21	41	37	**2.14**
3	Rate of illiteracy is alarming	34	60	13	8	**3.04**
4	Illiteracy rate could be associated with level of Government commitment to education	45	52	12	6	**3.18**
5	Unemployment rate is high due to illiteracy	79	22	6	8	**3.49**
6	Lack of education leads to high rate of unemployment and poverty	18	21	37	39	**2.16**
7	Poverty is a precursor to crime	40	54	13	8	**3.09**
8	Education determines poverty level	25	41	40	9	**2.71**
9	Corruption is at high level due to lack of ethical and moral education	74	30	5	6	**3.49**
10	Corruption is a result of selfishness/unpatriotism	66	38	9	2	**3.46**
11	Ineffective education breeds corruption	34	48	28	5	**2.97**
12	Kidnaping is associated with poverty and lack of moral education	46	45	20	4	**3.16**
13	Kidnaping is associated with unemployment	46	45	18	6	**3.14**
14	Kidnaping is associated with illiteracy	22	37	40	6	**2.71**
15	Kidnaping is associated with unpatriotism and greed	30	58	19	8	**2.96**
16	Insurgency is associated with high level of illiteracy	46	46	14	9	**3.12**
				Grand Mean		**2.98**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Respondents' views on the correlation between the child education and insecurity in Nigeria were presented with weighted mean to each item on Table 3. The highest weighted mean to the items was 3.49 while the lowest weighted mean was 2.14. This resulted into a grand mean of 2.98.

Table 4: Importance of Child Education to Nigerian Security

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Child education is the most powerful weapon known for reducing crime	43	53	17	2	**3.19**
2	Child education is the most powerful weapon	39	56	17	3	**3.14**

	known for reducing inequality					
3	Child education is the foundation for a sustainable growth and development of every nation	66	42	6	1	**3.50**
4	Child education fosters unity among the citizenry	49	57	8	1	**3.34**
5	Child education reduces the high rate of illiteracy in Nigeria	56	43	15	1	**3.34**
6	Child education provides solutions to unemployment in Nigeria	30	51	24	10	**2.88**
7	Child education plays a vital role in curbing the menace of insecurity associated with penury in Nigeria	28	58	24	5	**2.95**
8	Child education is the major remedy to insurgency in Nigeria	25	51	35	4	**2.84**
9	Child education is the answer to the problem of insecurity associated with corruption in Nigeria	25	45	40	5	**2.78**
10	Child education is an effective therapy to menace of insecurity associated with kidnapping in Nigeria	19	54	35	7	**2.74**
					Grand Mean	**3.09**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4 depicted respondents' views to the items related to roles of child education in ensuring security in the society. The items were agreed upon with least weighted mean of 2.74 and maximum weighted mean of 3.34. This gives a grand-mean of 3.09.

Table 5: Correlation Matrix of Data on Table 3

	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11	B12	B13	B14	B15	B16
B1	1															
B2	-.013	1														
B3	-.062	.192*	1													
B4	-.013	.114	.386**	1												
B5	-.067	-.019	.186*	.055	1											
B6	-.032	.174*	-.047	.077	-.251**	1										
B7	.051	-.150	-.030	-.050	.261**	-.132	1									
B8	.026	.269**	.311**	.226**	-.085	.057	-.078	1								
B9	-.084	-.033	.202*	.047	.292**	-.193*	.209*	.161*	1							
B10	-.062	.097	.069	.020	.204*	-.222**	.042	-.106	.419**	1						
B11	.039	-.012	.002	-.079	-.071	.220**	-.176**	.148	-.102	-.089	1					

B12	.017	.176*	.079	.022	-.047	.101	.138	.178*	.157*	.216*	.219**	1			
B13	.003	.080	.101	-.036	.001	-.052	.206*	.142	.113	.192*	.162*	.601**	1		
B14	.112	.054	.002	.079	-.023	.223**	-.184*	.211*	-.104	-.153	.457**	.361**	.232**	1	
B15	-.054	-.041	.266**	.100	.006	.027	.079	.181*	.122	.179*	.219**	.147	.213*	.325**	1
B16	-.022	-.040	.306**	.204*	.110	.053	.030	.076	-.059	.048	.199*	.102	.290**	.162*	.397**	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

Correlation of the items on Table 3 above were presented on table 6. Items 1 to 12 were represented by B1 to B12 respectively.

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of Data on Table 4

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10
C1	1									
C2	.474**	1								
C3	.221**	.409**	1							
C4	.400**	.229**	.060	1						
C5	.312**	.343**	.357**	.322**	1					
C6	.337**	.205*	.012	.451**	.249**	1				
C7	.400**	.525**	.247**	.153	.275**	.234**	1			
C8	.348**	.139	.073	-.007	.093	.345**	.288**	1		
C9	.242**	.331**	.061	.023	.182*	.257**	.388**	.456**	1	
C10	.303**	.364**	.285**	-.086	.248**	.155	.484**	.539**	.586**	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

Correlation of the items on Table 4 above were presented on table 7. Items 1 to 10 were represented by C1 toC10 respectively.

Discussion of findings

It can be concluded that there is urgent and quick need for government and individual to fight all the hindrances that are confronting Nigerian educational system in order to perfect Nigerian children education. High level of insecurity in Nigeria is associated with numerous factors in which ineffective child education is the most prominent and root to other factors. Although, many Nigerians are literate but are not sufficiently educated because the impacts of child education could not be found in them. This is because what is taught in the school environment is at variance to the needs of society. Most Nigerians are proud of certificates without practical skills. This menace breeds high rate of unemployment and penury as many graduates of Nigeria higher institutions cannot use the child education they acquired

to earn living outside white-collar jobs, particularly government jobs. Aftermath of the unemployment due to inadequate education throws many youths into unpatriotic acts and crimes such as robbery, kidnapping and endemic corruption.

For instance, many Nigerians are so greedy and selfish to the extent that resources that are meant for the growth and development of the country, in general, are being shared among few to the detriment of others.

The rate of corruption, strike, lack of seriousness, illegalities, and irregularities that dominate Nigerian Ministry of Education must be legally looked into and the guilty officials and staff must be punished as lesson and deterrent to others.

It is then clear that inadequate education in Nigeria, is responsible for insecurity associated with penury, unemployment, corruption, insurgency and kidnapping. Therefore, effective education is the major antidote to insecurity in Nigeria. This finding is consistent with Malala (2016) that submits that through wars and weapons terrorists are killed, but the ideology of terrorism can only be ended through child education; Malala cited in Jayalakshmi (2018) that a drone attack may kill two or three terrorists but it will not kill terrorism, hence, guns and weapons should be swapped for textbooks; Jonathan (2016) that submits child education as long term and everlasting tool for securing a nation from insecurity and its associates; and Al-Rodhan (2017) that concludes that sustainable global security can only be achieved when child education is made a priority by states and their institutions.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are submitted:

i. Child education should be given priority in the nation's budget.
ii. Schools should be equipped with adequate teaching and learning facilities to enhance transfer of adequate knowledge.
iii. National database which will capture every citizen should be created.
iv. Security apparatuses in the country should be equipped with adequate human and non-human resources.
v. Wealthy Nigerians should invest their resources in Nigeria to curb the menace of unemployment.
vi. Value education should be emphasized early in children's education to instill tolerance, empathy, cooperation, good neighborliness among others, to shape appropriate character that will shun violence and insecurity.

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