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FROM THE DESK OF LEAD EDITOR

The Centre for General Nigerian Studies had the second summit held from 4th – 7th December, 2024. The theme of the summit was aptly coined, Fostering Integrity and Peace: Tackling Corruption and Promoting Ethical Leadership in African Education. The summit attracted participants drawn from universities within and outside Nigeria. The summit was declared open by the management team of Lagos State University, ably led by the Vice Chancellor, Prof Ibiyemi Ibilola Olatunji Bello mni NPOM GCGNS inside the main bowl of the Makanjuola Lecture Theatre, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos State, Nigeria. It was a 4 day of academic and cutting-edge activities. Scholarly papers were presented, and thereafter, the papers were subjected to peer review. In all, more than 52 presentations were made, but only 20 articles scaled through the hurdles. Ladies and gentlemen, the volume 4 of the journal of Contemporary Issues in Nigerian Economy (JCINE) is highly recommended to scholars, researchers, policy makers, and other stakeholders in the field of education.

Prof. M.O.B Mohammed FNAEAP
Lead Editor

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Abstract

Student poverty and insecurity in Government Technical Colleges (GTCs) of Oyo State might be responsible for the downturn in their standard and quality of education. Poverty and insecurity could pose serious problems that lead to low academic achievement, high dropout rates, and unfavourable mental health consequences. This study examined the complex relationships between poverty, insecurity and education in GTCs of Oyo State, Nigeria. It emphasised how these problems prevent students from accessing high-quality education due to unsafe learning environments. The investigation evaluated the causes of these problems and offered remedies that can promote safer and more encouraging learning settings. The quantitative and qualitative data, obtained from respondents to the questionnaires and interview/observations were analysed. Findings showed that because of financial limitations on school supplies and fees, poverty had a significant role in preventing students from accessing education. Results confirmed that school attendance was further discouraged by insecurity, societal violence and inadequate school infrastructure. The study concluded that government intervention is inadequate in the form of required financing, enhanced school security, and legislation aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils. Recommendation was made that strengthening school security and reducing poverty are critical for raising student achievement and promoting national development. Government spending on education should be increased, community engagement should be activated, and specific initiatives should be introduced to support low-income families. Modern security architecture should be put in place to safeguard lives and school property.

Keywords: Poverty, School security, Educational access, Government policies, Academic achievement

Introduction

In Nigeria, poverty and insecurity are widespread problems that have significant impact on many areas, including education. These problems pose serious challenges to GTCs. Nigerian secondary schools, especially in rural and economically challenged areas. This significantly restricts the children from poor families to have access to essential services, such as education. This issue is made worse by insecurity, which is prevalent in kidnapping, banditry, and insurgency, which makes the classrooms insecure for both teachers and students. Nearly 10.5 million Nigerian

children, many of whom are in the secondary school age groups, are not in school, as estimated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF Annual Report, 2023). There are challenges in education as a result of both financial difficulty and a lack of security infrastructure. Students lack basic supplies like textbooks and uniforms. Teachers are underpaid, and school buildings are frequently in disrepair (Adedeji & Olayiwola, 2020). A common factor contributing to the failure to sustain regular attendance at schools is insecurity because many parents worry about the safety of their kids.

Poverty and insecurity are significant challenges that affect education in many countries of the world. Nigeria is one of such countries. In Nigeria, poverty and insecurity are critical barriers to education. These make it difficult for students to attend schools regularly, focus on their studies and succeed academically because families struggle to meet the basic needs of their children, such as food, shelter and safety. Many students from this country come from low-income families. The World Bank (2024) reported that over 40% of Nigerians live below the poverty line, and this affects their access to quality education and essential resources. Schools in impoverished areas often lack basic facilities, trained teachers and learning materials.

Impact on Education

It is impossible to exaggerate how detrimental poverty and insecurity are to the Nigerian education system. Impoverished students have less access to transportation, food, and basic educational resources, which have an impact on their ability to focus and do well in class. According to a National Bureau of Statistics report from 2021, students from lower-income families are twice as likely to drop out of school than their affluent counterparts. The inability of households to pay for textbooks, uniforms, and school fees is directly related to this dropout rate (NBS, 2021). Additionally, poverty has a direct impact on the physical and mental health of students, as many undernourished kids find it difficult to satisfy academic standards (Adamu & Hassan, 2020). Consequently, the issue of insecurity in schools is not unique; rather, it is a reflection of Nigeria's larger inability to address structural inequality and issues with governance (Bamidele & Olajide, 2023).

Effect of Poverty and Insecurity in Schools

Poverty and insecurity are two interrelated phenomena that significantly impact the educational landscape, particularly in developing nations like Nigeria. Understanding the definitions and frameworks that underpin these concepts is critical for addressing the challenges they pose to education. According to the World Bank Development Report (2024), poverty is the state in which people are unable to pay for necessities, including food, shelter, healthcare, and education. Poverty shows up in Nigerian schools as a lack of transportation fare, inability to pay school fees and limited access to learning resources. Due to their frequent inability to complete the prerequisites for school, students from low-income families frequently drop out of school or perform poorly in their academic work (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Indicators such as student enrollment, attendance rates and access to educational resources — all of which are noticeable in lower disadvantaged areas— are commonly used to quantify poverty in schools.

On the other hand, insecurity is defined as a lack of safety, stability and peace in a given setting, which frequently results in conflict or violence. Insecurity in Nigerian secondary schools is mostly linked to inter-communal strife, terrorism, and local violence, especially in the country's north, where extremist organisations like Boko Haram have attacked educational facilities (Amnesty

International, 2022). The process of education is disrupted by insecurity, which results in school closures, terror among parents, teachers and students. Occasionally, students are abducted or murdered (Human Rights Watch, 2023). As a result, pupils' inability to learn and attend classes regularly has impacted schools. This has long-term negative effects on educational attainment.

Students' entitlement to education is violated by the unfriendly learning environment that is brought about by both poverty and insecurity. These variables are frequently linked together because poverty feeds poverty cycles and makes places with lower incomes more susceptible to insecurity (UNICEF, 2023). Comprehending these frameworks is crucial to tackling the systemic obstacles that impede children from obtaining high-quality education.

The Role of Government and Policy in Curbing Poverty and Ensuring School Safety

To ensure school safety and mitigate poverty, government policies are essential. Numerous programs have been launched in Nigeria to address these issues, but due to inadequate financing and poor implementation, their efficacy is still limited. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) program, which was introduced in 1999 offers free, mandatory education to kids up to junior secondary school, is one of the most important measures. Although the UBE programme has resulted in higher participation rates, the problems caused by poverty and insecurity have not been adequately addressed. Despite government efforts to protect these areas, schools in insecure zones continue to be closed or unsafe. However, without stronger government intervention and better coordination between stakeholders, these efforts remain insufficient to address the scope of the problem. Effective policies require not only financial investment but also political will and community involvement to ensure that resources are properly allocated and that schools are safe, accessible, and inclusive for all students.

Community Engagement

Community engagement plays an important role in the improvement of the effectiveness of education, particularly in diverse STEM disciplines, which can enhance their critical thinking and problem solving skills. (Lee and Brown, 2018). Engaging with local communities allows students to explore the practical applications in their everyday lives and enables them to gain a deeper understanding of how to address challenges faced in their communities, (Ogunniyi and Okebukola, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Poverty and inability of students to afford the requirements of technical education appears to have negative impact on the academic performance of GTCs students. The insecurity being experienced seems to complicate situation as thuggery and community insurgency sometimes disrupts the academic processes in the colleges. Most researchers focused on employability skills and enhancing practical skills acquisitions among technical colleges. Few works have been done on poverty and insecurity. This gap could increase social vices rather than adding economic values to the society as the unemployment rate increases. Therefore, this study investigated the influence of poverty and insecurity on student academic performance and access to high-quality learning environment in GTCs of Oyo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. **Research Question 1:** What is the level of student poverty in Government Technical Colleges of Oyo State, Nigeria
2. **Research Question 2:** What is the level of insecurity of learning environment in Government Technical Colleges of Oyo State, Nigeria

Methodology

Quantitative data obtained from respondents to the questionnaires were analysed by using frequency count, mean and weighted average mean. Also, qualitative data were obtained through observations and interview with stake holders. A thorough grasp of the problems are made possible by the mixed-methods approach that takes into account both quantitative data from surveys and more in-depth information from policy analysis and interviews (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). A policy analysis of government programs, including the Safe Schools Initiative and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, as well as a Review of previous research conducted on poverty and insecurity in education, were analysed. Information was collected through surveys focusing on regions with various levels of insecurity. In addition, interviews were conducted with education stakeholders, including school administrators and policymakers, to gain insights into the challenges of poverty and insecurity. The population of this study comprises all the Government Technical Colleges (GTCs) in Oyo State as listed below:

1. Government Technical College, Ibadan
2. Government Technical College, Oyo
3. Government Technical College, Ogbomosho
4. Government Technical College, Iseyin
5. Government Technical College, Shaki

The above GTCs have a population of 5 principals and 81 teachers, out of which the samples were selected. Multi stage sampling technique was used to select participants for the study. At the first stage, three (3) principals of GTCs in Ibadan, Oyo and Ogbomosho, were selected from the five (5) technical colleges representing sixty percent (60%) of the total technical colleges in Oyo State using purposive sampling technique based on the accessibility, closeness and proximity of the technical colleges to the researcher. At the second stage, seven (7) departments were selected which are: building, bricklaying and concreting, catering craft practice, electrical installation, mechanical engineering, painting and decoration, business studies and motor vehicle mechanics in the 3 selected government technical colleges. The purpose of the selection was based on the fact that the departments exist in all the 3 selected government technical colleges.

At the third stage, three (3) principals and fifty-eight (58) teachers were selected using purposive sampling technique. The reason for purposive sampling technique was based on the fact that they are in the best position to provide information about the technical colleges. The three (3) principals responded to the interview, while the 58 teachers responded to the questionnaires.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the level of student poverty in Government Technical Colleges of Oyo State, Nigeria?

S/N	ITEMS	SD	D	A	SA	\bar{X}	Decision
Level of student poverty in GTCs of Oyo State, Nigeria							
1	Students cannot afford to procure needed text books for their training	0 0%	2 3.5%	40 68.5%	16 27%	3.29	Very high
2	Practical training sessions without required equipment is not adequate	5 8.6%	5 8.6%	30 51.8%	18 31%	3.16	Very High
3	Students cannot buy snacks during break period	0 0%	0 0%	30 51.8%	28 48.2%	3.18	Very High
4	Students are less creative when they been taught without the right tools and equipment	3 5.2%	5 8.6%	25 43.1%	25 43.1%	3.10	Very High
5	Creativity is discouraged when students are taught without the right tools and equipment	1 1.7%	7 12.1%	30 51.8%	20 34.5%	3.12	High
Weighted Average Mean							3.17

Source: Fieldwork 2024

Table 1 shows that 86.3% of the respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed that creativity is discouraged when students are taught without the right tools and equipment in the school while the other 13.7% respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. The weighted average mean of all the respondents to research question 1 is 3.17. Having adopted a rating scale of very low (1.0 – 1.5), low (1.6 – 2.0), fair (2.1 – 2.5), high (2.6 – 3.0) and very high (3.1 – 5.0), the value obtained implies that majority of the respondents believe that the level of student poverty in Government Technical Colleges of Oyo State, among the students of the selected Government Technical Colleges, is very high.

Research Question 2: What is the level of insecurity of learning environment in Government Technical Colleges of Oyo State, Nigeria?

Level of insecurity of learning environment in GTCs of Oyo State, Nigeria

6	Training sessions are sometimes disrupted by community disturbances	5 8.6%	3 5.2%	30 51.8%	20 34.5%	3.14	Very High
7	The school environment is secure for students to practice after close of work	0 0%	5 8.6%	25 43.1%	28 48.2%	3.17	Very High
8	There is no need for security men to guard the school premises during the day.	3 5.2%	0 0%	10 17.3%	45 75.6%	3.13	Very High
9	There is no need for security men to guard the school premises during the night.	10 17.3%	15 25.9%	20 34.5%	18 31%	2.97	High
10	Regulation of visitors entry permission is not required as a safety measure	30 51.8%	15 25.9%	5 8.6%	8 13.8%	2.03	Low
11	Students learn faster when security is guaranteed in the environment	3 5.2%	5 8.6%	20 34.5%	30 51.8%	3.14	Very High
Weighted Average Mean							2.93

Source: Fieldwork 2024

Table 2 shows that 86.3% of the respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed that students learn faster when security is guaranteed in the environment of the school while the other 13.8% respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The weighted average mean of all the respondents to

research question 2 is 2.93. Having adopted a rating scale of very low (1.0 – 1.5), low (1.6 – 2.0), fair (2.1 – 2.5), high (2.6 – 3.0) and very high (3.1 – 5.0). This value obtained implies that majority of the respondents believe that the level of insecurity of learning environment in Government Technical Colleges of Oyo State, Nigeria, is high. This finding is in line with other studies and statistics from organisations like the World Bank and UNICEF, which have repeatedly shown how socioe-economic variables affect education in developing nations like Nigeria (World Bank, 2024; UNICEF, 2023).

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study showed that poverty and insecurity are socio-economic problems that extend beyond other challenges to education and are a reflection of Nigeria's pervasive inequality and poor governance. These findings are consistent with the Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), which holds that long-term economic growth depends on educational investment. Nigeria's economy and workers are at risk since the country does not offer a secure and easily accessible education.

It is noted from the findings that majority of the respondents agree that all the necessary teaching resources and equipment required for the effectiveness of education in the rural secondary schools are not provided, this is why the standard of education is low, when compared with secondary schools in the urban areas. The government should seek to put necessary measures and policies in place to ensure that needed teaching resources and equipment required for the effectiveness of education in the rural secondary schools are provided. Also, government should

Teachers in the rural secondary schools could enhance the standard of education by increased monitoring of the students placed under their watch to ensure that they perform the task expected of them. This invariably would improve not only the students being taught by one teacher but also the entire students' body in the school, because they all interact among themselves.

Conclusion

This investigation concludes that in Nigeria, poverty and insecurity are critical barriers to education. Poverty makes it difficult for students to attend school regularly. Poverty and insecurity have negatively affected school education in Nigeria, both in terms of accessibility and quality. Students' entitlement to good education is compromised by the unfriendly learning environment caused by both poverty and insecurity. Societal challenges like economic inequality, banditry, insurgency and regional violence have complicated the challenges confronting the development of education in Nigeria. Fostering social stability and economic development through quality education could not be achieved due to the ravaging poverty and insecurity. The potential for academic achievement of school-age children in Nigeria has been restricted and jeopardised due to the inability of the government and society to create a secure and encouraging learning environment. Effective policies require not only financial investment but also political will and community involvement to ensure that resources are properly allocated and that schools are safe, accessible, and inclusive for all students. Consequently, improving education requires addressing and resisting poverty and insecurity issues in schools.

Recommendations

Recommendations made towards curbing the adverse effects of poverty and insecurity in Government Technical Schools are:

- i. Stakeholders and education agencies should advise top government functionaries to formulate policies that would ensure adequate security of the school.
- ii. Adequate financial resources should be allocated for the provision of security architecture to make the school environment safe for teaching and learning.
- iii. Basic materials and amenities such as textbooks, exercise books and furniture for the classroom could be provided by the government education agencies so that the indigent children in society could benefit from free education.
- iv. Community involvement in the administration of school activities and programmes should be improved upon to ensure that resources are properly allocated towards making schools safe, accessible, and inclusive for all students.
- v. Education should be a greater priority in the allocation and appropriation of the national budget.

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