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Article

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IMPACT OF INSECURITY ON PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA'S PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of insecurity on public service delivery in Nigeria's public administration system. The study was motivated by the growing level of insecurity in Nigeria and its adverse effects on the ability of government institutions to deliver essential services effectively. The objectives of the study were to examine the nature of insecurity in Nigeria, assess its effects on public service delivery, and identify strategies for improving service delivery amid insecurity. The study adopted a qualitative research approach based on the review of relevant secondary sources. The study relies on system theory as its theoretical foundation. The findings revealed that insecurity in Nigeria had significantly disrupted government operations, destroyed public infrastructure, and reduced access to essential services such as healthcare and education. It was also found that insecurity had led to human resource challenges, increased government expenditure on security, and weakened public trust in government institutions. The study further showed that despite various government interventions, insecurity continued to hinder effective public administration and service delivery. The study concluded that insecurity had a negative and far-reaching impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study recommended strengthening security institutions, improving intelligence gathering, enhancing community policing, and increasing citizen participation in security governance as key strategies for improving public service delivery in Nigeria.

Keywords: Insecurity, Public Service Delivery, Public Administration, Governance, Nigeria.

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Introduction

Insecurity has become one of the most critical challenges confronting governance and public administration in Nigeria. It refers to the absence of safety and protection of lives, property, and government institutions from threats such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, and communal conflicts. In recent years, the escalation of insecurity has significantly affected the ability of government institutions to deliver essential public services effectively. Public service delivery is a core function of public administration and involves the provision of basic services such as healthcare, education, transportation, security, and social welfare to citizens. According to World Bank (2022), effective public service delivery is essential for improving citizens' welfare and promoting sustainable development. However, in Nigeria, the increasing wave of insecurity has disrupted the smooth operation of public institutions, particularly in conflict-prone regions. The Nigerian public administration system is responsible for implementing government policies and ensuring that public goods and services reach citizens efficiently. However, insecurity has weakened institutional capacity, reduced workforce productivity, and damaged critical infrastructure needed for service delivery. For instance, attacks on schools, health facilities, and government offices have led to closures, displacement of workers, and reduced access to essential services (UNDP, 2021). Furthermore, insecurity has increased the cost of governance in Nigeria. Government resources that could have been used for development are now diverted toward security operations and emergency responses. According to Adebayo (2021), insecurity undermines administrative efficiency by creating fear among public servants and reducing their willingness to operate in high-risk areas. The persistence of insecurity also affects public trust in government institutions. When citizens are unable to access basic services due to unsafe environments, confidence in public administration declines. This situation creates a cycle of underdevelopment and weak governance structures, especially in rural communities where state presence is already limited. Given the increasing impact of insecurity on governance and development, it becomes necessary to examine how insecurity affects public service delivery within Nigeria's public administration system and to identify possible strategies for improvement.

Statement of the Problem

Despite various government efforts to improve security and enhance public service delivery in Nigeria, insecurity continues to pose a serious challenge to effective public administration. The rising cases of terrorism, kidnapping, banditry, and communal conflicts have disrupted government operations and limited access to essential public services in many parts of the country. Public institutions such as schools, hospitals, and local government offices are frequently targeted or affected by insecurity, leading to reduced service delivery and abandonment of government projects. In many cases, public servants are unwilling to work in high-risk areas, resulting in shortages of manpower and weakened administrative capacity. Although several policies and security interventions have been introduced, the expected improvement in safety and service delivery has not been achieved. This persistent gap between policy intentions and outcomes raises concerns about the effectiveness of public administration in managing insecurity-related challenges. Therefore, the problem of this study is to examine how insecurity has impacted public service delivery in Nigeria's public administration system and to identify the underlying factors responsible for this situation. The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of insecurity on public service delivery in Nigeria's public administration system. The specific objectives are to:

- i. assess the effects of insecurity on public service delivery in Nigeria

- ii. identify the challenges insecurity poses to public administration and governance; and
- iii. suggest strategies for improving public service delivery in the face of insecurity in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Insecurity: Insecurity has been a subject that has attracted a rapidly growing interest and concern among scholars in social science. A wide spectrum of issues on the subject - insecurity has remained persistent. New breakthroughs and findings are still being made, showing the strategic importance of security in the development of nations and actualization of peace and order in all levels of human relations. Maslow (1954) described an insecure person as a person who perceive the world or sees it as threatening Jungle and most human being as dangerous treacherous, selfish, feels rejected and isolated person, hostile, is generally pessimistic and unhappy, shows sign of tension and conflict tends to turn inwards, and is trouble by guilt-feeling. Insecurity refers to the absence of safety, stability, and protection of lives and property within a state or society. It encompasses conditions in which individuals, communities, and government institutions are exposed to threats such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, insurgency, and communal violence. Insecurity undermines social order and weakens the capacity of government to maintain peace and enforce laws. According to Adebayo (2021), insecurity arises when the state fails to effectively guarantee the protection of citizens and their properties. It manifests in different forms and varies across regions depending on socio-political and economic conditions. In the Nigerian context, insecurity has become a persistent challenge affecting both rural and urban areas, thereby disrupting governance and development processes.

Public Service Delivery: Public service delivery refers to the provision of essential goods and services by government institutions to citizens to improve their welfare and quality of life. These services include healthcare, education, security, infrastructure, water supply, and social protection. According to the World Bank (2022), effective public service delivery is a key indicator of good governance and development performance. It reflects the ability of public institutions to efficiently allocate resources and respond to citizens' needs. Public service delivery in public administration involves planning, organizing, implementing, and monitoring government programmes aimed at achieving public welfare. In Nigeria, service delivery is often affected by institutional inefficiencies, corruption, and insecurity, which reduce accessibility and quality of services, particularly in vulnerable regions.

Literature and Empirical Studies

Insecurity has become a major constraint to effective public service delivery in Nigeria. It affects the capacity of government institutions to function efficiently, undermines development efforts, and reduces citizens' access to essential services. The impacts are multidimensional, affecting administrative operations, infrastructure, human resources, and public trust in government. Across different regions of Nigeria, several real-life incidents demonstrate how insecurity has weakened the public administration system. Insecurity significantly disrupts the normal operations of government institutions. Frequent attacks, threats, and violent incidents often force public offices to shut down temporarily or permanently, especially in high-risk regions, thereby slowing administrative processes and policy execution (UNDP, 2021). For instances, In Borno State, many local government offices were shut down or relocated during the peak of Boko Haram insurgency, especially in areas such as Gwoza and Bama, where government presence was temporarily displaced. Similarly,

in parts of Zamfara and Katsina States, repeated bandit attacks have forced local government secretariats to operate irregularly, affecting revenue collection and administrative coordination.

Insecurity has led to widespread destruction of public infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, police stations, and administrative buildings. These facilities are essential for effective service delivery but are often targeted during violent attacks (World Bank, 2022). In the North-East region, Boko Haram insurgents destroyed numerous public facilities in Maiduguri, Damasak, and Gwoza, including schools and health centres. In Plateau State, communal violence has also led to the destruction of public buildings and displacement of government institutions in affected communities. The healthcare sector has been severely affected by insecurity. Health workers are often kidnapped, attacked, or forced to relocate, while patients are unable to access medical services due to unsafe environments (UNDP, 2021). In rural Borno State, several primary healthcare centres were abandoned after repeated insurgent attacks. Similarly, in Kaduna State, health workers in rural areas such as Birnin Gwari axis frequently relocate to urban centres due to banditry, leaving communities without adequate healthcare services. Education has also suffered significantly due to insecurity, with attacks on schools, kidnapping of students, and destruction of learning facilities disrupting academic activities across the country. The Chibok school abduction (2014) and Dapchi kidnapping (2018) remain major examples of insecurity affecting education in Nigeria. More recently, in Oyo, Zamfara and Niger States, several schools were shut down for extended periods due to fear of bandit attacks, leading to learning disruptions and student withdrawals.

Rural communities are disproportionately affected by insecurity, resulting in reduced access to essential public services such as healthcare, education, and agricultural support. In parts of Benue and Plateau States, frequent communal clashes have limited access to government extension services and rural development programmes. Similarly, in North-West Nigeria, insecurity has made it difficult for agricultural officers to reach farming communities, reducing government support for rural livelihoods. Insecurity places a heavy financial burden on government, as funds are increasingly diverted from development projects to security operations, emergency response, and rebuilding destroyed infrastructure (World Bank, 2022). Billions of naira have been allocated annually to counter-insurgency operations in the North-East, reducing available funds for education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. In addition, rebuilding destroyed public facilities in states like Borno and Yobe has significantly increased government expenditure. Persistent insecurity undermines citizens' trust in government institutions. When people are unable to access basic services or feel unprotected, confidence in public administration declines (UNDP, 2021). In several communities affected by banditry in Zamfara and Katsina States, citizens have resorted to self-help security arrangements due to perceived weak government protection. This reflects declining trust in formal security and administrative institutions.

Several empirical studies conducted examined the relationship between insecurity and public service delivery in Nigeria. These studies consistently show that insecurity has a significant negative effect on governance, institutional performance, and access to public services. For instance, Orjiakor *et al.* (2025) investigated how insecurity affects health service delivery in urban Nigeria. Using qualitative methods and stakeholder interviews, the study found that kidnapping, armed robbery, and violent crimes targeted at health workers led to staff absenteeism, disruption of hospital operations, and reduced access to healthcare services. The study concluded that insecurity significantly weakened the functionality of

health institutions and reduced service efficiency in urban areas. Similarly, Abia and Ugwu (2023) examined the impact of insecurity on educational service delivery in southeastern Nigeria. The study revealed that frequent attacks on schools and fear of abduction led to school closures, reduced student attendance, and destruction of educational infrastructure. The findings showed that insecurity negatively affected both teaching and learning outcomes in public schools.

In another study, Ndaage and Udu (2025) analyzed insecurity and public administration in Nigeria. Their findings indicated that insurgency and communal violence disrupted administrative operations by displacing public servants, destroying government facilities, and diverting public funds from development projects to security management. The study emphasized that insecurity weakens decentralization and reduces the effectiveness of service delivery at the grassroots level. Furthermore, Ijirshar *et al.* (2025) examined the effect of insecurity on agricultural output in Benue State using survey and statistical analysis. The study found that insecurity significantly reduced agricultural productivity, income levels, and rural livelihoods, which in turn affected government revenue and rural service provision. The authors concluded that insecurity has both direct and indirect effects on public sector performance. Okoli (2020) examined the implications of insecurity for governance and public service delivery in Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive research design and relied on secondary data obtained from government publications, journal articles, and security reports. The findings revealed that persistent insecurity significantly weakened institutional effectiveness by disrupting government activities, reducing workforce productivity, and increasing administrative costs. The study concluded that insecurity has become a major obstacle to effective governance and recommended stronger institutional reforms, improved intelligence gathering, and greater collaboration among security agencies.

Onuoha (2021) investigated the impact of insurgency on public institutions in northeastern Nigeria using documentary analysis. The study found that repeated attacks on government establishments forced the closure of many public offices and disrupted the implementation of government programmes. It further revealed that insecurity contributed to poor service delivery, increased displacement of public servants, and weakened citizens' confidence in government institutions. The study recommended enhanced security coordination and increased government investment in rebuilding affected communities. Ewetan and Urhie (2019) examined the relationship between insecurity, economic development, and governance in Nigeria. Using secondary data and descriptive analysis, the researchers found that insecurity discouraged investment, reduced economic productivity, and diverted public resources from development projects to security operations. They concluded that the resulting decline in government revenue adversely affected the provision of healthcare, education, and other essential public services. Akinwale (2022) investigated the effects of banditry on rural development and public service delivery in northwestern Nigeria. The study employed a survey research design involving rural residents and local government officials. Findings showed that frequent attacks disrupted agricultural activities, forced the closure of schools and health centres, and prevented government officials from implementing rural development programmes. The study recommended strengthening rural policing and improving community participation in security management.

Adamu and Mohammed (2023) examined the effect of insecurity on local government administration in northern Nigeria using questionnaires and interviews. The study revealed that insecurity significantly reduced internally generated revenue, disrupted

local government administration, and weakened the delivery of essential public services. It concluded that effective decentralization cannot be achieved without improving security at the grassroots level. Ojo (2022) assessed the effects of kidnapping on public administration and service delivery in southwestern Nigeria. Using qualitative interviews with public servants, the study found that fear of abduction reduced staff morale, increased absenteeism, and delayed project implementation. The study concluded that kidnapping poses a serious threat to administrative efficiency and recommended enhanced security measures for government personnel and public institutions. Nwankwo and Okeke (2024) investigated the relationship between insecurity and public infrastructure development in Nigeria. The study adopted a mixed-method approach involving questionnaires and documentary evidence. The findings indicated that insecurity delayed infrastructure projects, increased construction costs, and discouraged contractors from executing government projects in high-risk areas. The researchers concluded that insecurity significantly slows infrastructural development and limits citizens' access to public services.

Yusuf *et al.* (2023) examined the effects of insecurity on healthcare administration in northern Nigeria. Using survey data collected from healthcare workers across selected public hospitals, the study found that insecurity contributed to shortages of healthcare personnel, interrupted immunization programmes, and reduced utilization of healthcare services. The authors recommended increased protection for healthcare facilities and improved incentives for medical personnel working in conflict-prone communities. Afolabi (2021) examined the influence of insecurity on public trust in government institutions using opinion survey data collected from residents in selected Nigerian states. The findings revealed that increasing insecurity reduced citizens' confidence in public institutions and negatively affected their willingness to cooperate with government agencies. The study recommended transparent governance, improved communication, and enhanced public participation in security management as strategies for rebuilding public trust. Ibrahim and Sani (2024) examined the effect of insecurity on public sector performance in Nigeria using secondary data obtained from government reports and development agencies. The study found that insecurity reduced employee productivity, delayed policy implementation, increased operational costs, and weakened institutional effectiveness. It concluded that improving national security is essential for enhancing public sector performance and achieving sustainable socio-economic development.

Theoretical Framework

The Systems Theory is adopted as the most suitable theoretical framework for this study. The theory was developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy and later applied to organizational and administrative studies. It views an organization as an open system that interacts with its environment through inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback. In public administration, the systems theory explains how government institutions receive inputs (resources, information, and demands from citizens), process them through administrative structures, and produce outputs in the form of public goods and services. Feedback from citizens helps to improve future policy decisions and service delivery. The relevance of the systems theory to this study lies in its ability to explain how insecurity disrupts the flow of inputs and outputs within the public administration system. Insecurity affects personnel, infrastructure, and resource allocation, thereby reducing the effectiveness of service delivery. For example, when government offices are attacked or when public servants cannot operate safely, the entire administrative system becomes inefficient. According to Easton (1965), political systems function effectively only when there is stability in the environment. Insecurity

creates instability in the environment, thereby weakening the capacity of the public administration system to function effectively. Therefore, the systems theory provides a clear analytical framework for understanding how insecurity impacts public service delivery in Nigeria's public administration system by disrupting institutional processes, reducing efficiency, and weakening feedback mechanisms.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research approach based on the review and analysis of secondary data. The qualitative method was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to examine existing literature on insecurity and public service delivery in Nigeria and to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the two variables. Data for the study were obtained from secondary sources, including textbooks, peer-reviewed journal articles, government publications, policy documents, and other relevant scholarly publications on insecurity, governance, and public administration. The collected information was analyzed using descriptive content analysis. This method involved critically reviewing, organizing, and interpreting the available literature in line with the objectives of the study. Relevant concepts, empirical findings, and policy documents were synthesized to identify the major forms of insecurity affecting Nigeria, their implications for public service delivery, and practical strategies for improving governance under conditions of insecurity. The use of content analysis ensured that the findings were based on credible and verifiable sources while providing a systematic explanation of the issues examined.

Findings

The study revealed that insecurity has become one of the greatest threats to effective public service delivery in Nigeria's public administration system. The review of relevant literature showed that terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, insurgency, and communal conflicts have significantly undermined government institutions and weakened administrative efficiency across different regions of the country. The study found that insecurity disrupts government operations by forcing the closure or relocation of public offices, particularly in conflict-prone areas. This has slowed policy implementation, delayed administrative processes, and reduced the capacity of government institutions to provide essential services to citizens. The study also established that insecurity has resulted in the destruction of critical public infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, police stations, roads, and government administrative buildings, thereby limiting access to basic public services. Furthermore, the study found that insecurity has adversely affected healthcare and educational service delivery. Many healthcare workers have relocated from unsafe communities, leading to shortages of medical personnel and reduced access to healthcare services, especially in rural areas. Similarly, attacks on educational institutions and the kidnapping of students have disrupted academic activities, reduced school enrolment, and weakened the quality of education in affected states.

The findings further indicated that insecurity has had significant financial implications for public administration. Government has increasingly diverted substantial financial resources from developmental projects such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and rural development to security operations and emergency interventions. This diversion of resources has slowed socio-economic development and reduced the quality of public services available to citizens. The study also revealed that insecurity has weakened public trust and confidence in government institutions. The inability of government to adequately protect lives and property has encouraged citizens in several communities to rely on

informal security arrangements and self-help mechanisms, thereby reducing confidence in formal public institutions and governance structures. Finally, the study found that strengthening security institutions, promoting community policing, improving intelligence gathering through modern technology, enhancing coordination among security agencies, and encouraging citizen participation in security governance are essential strategies for improving public service delivery in Nigeria. These measures would create a safer environment that enables public institutions to function more effectively and deliver quality services to the population.

Summary of Findings

This study examined the impact of insecurity on public service delivery in Nigeria's public administration system. The study found that insecurity has become a major obstacle to effective governance and service delivery across the country. It revealed that insecurity manifests in various forms such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, communal conflicts, and armed robbery, all of which negatively affect government operations. The study also established that insecurity disrupts government activities, destroys public infrastructure, reduces access to healthcare and education, limits rural service delivery, and creates serious human resource challenges in the public sector. Furthermore, it was found that insecurity increases government expenditure on security operations, thereby reducing funds available for development projects. In addition, the study revealed that insecurity weakens public trust in government institutions and reduces citizens' confidence in the ability of the state to provide safety and essential services. Despite various government interventions, the persistence of insecurity continues to hinder effective public administration in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that insecurity has a significant negative impact on public service delivery in Nigeria. It undermines the efficiency of public institutions, weakens administrative capacity, and reduces the quality and accessibility of essential services. The study further concludes that without adequate security, the goals of public administration cannot be fully achieved, as insecurity disrupts the implementation of government policies and programmes. Therefore, addressing insecurity is essential for improving governance, enhancing service delivery, and promoting sustainable national development. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Government should strengthen security institutions by improving funding, training, equipment, and welfare of security personnel.
- ii. Community policing strategies should be expanded to enhance collaboration between security agencies and local communities.
- iii. Modern technology such as surveillance systems, drones, and intelligence databases should be adopted to improve crime detection and prevention.
- iv. Public administration capacity should be strengthened through continuous training and development of civil servants in crisis management and emergency response.
- v. There should be improved coordination and communication between all security agencies to ensure faster and more effective responses to security threats.
- vi. Citizens should be actively involved in security governance through reporting systems, community engagement, and awareness programmes.
- vii. Government should prioritize policies that address the root causes of insecurity, such as unemployment, poverty, and social inequality.

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