

STATE CAPACITY AND THE MANAGEMENT OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: A PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The escalating insecurity crisis in Nigeria, especially the recent dimension in which criminals are now invading churches and communities without a slightest challenge to kidnap and massacre people has raised questions concerning capacity of the state to provide public safety, maintain public order and deliver good governance. Despite the huge public expenditure being incurred to provide effective security administration, this country has continued to experience depressing cases of terrorism, kidnapping, farmer-herder conflicts, brutal separatist agitations, communal violence and other forms of banditries across the six geo-political zones without any end in sight. This paper examined the relationship between state capacity and responses to insecurity in Nigeria from a public administration perspective. The paper utilised the New Public Governance theory as theoretical framework to explain the inability of the state security institution to curb the current growing rate of security threat. The paper is theoretical and it used secondary method for data collection. The analysis of the data was done through descriptive method. The paper found that weak institutions, poor inter-agency coordination, inadequate security policy implementation, unnecessary political patronage and limited administrative capacity have significantly undermined effective security management in Nigeria. The paper also analysed the effects of insecurity on governance, socio-economic development, public service delivery and citizens' trust in government institutions and found that inability of the Nigerian state to effectively mobilise institutional, administrative, and political resources has weakened the effectiveness of its responses to insecurity in governance process. The paper concluded that capacity of the state will effectively response to insecurity in Nigeria when the institutional governance is strengthened. It recommended among others comprehensive public sector reforms to improve the operation of security governance in to improve policy implementation for better security administration in Nigeria.

Keywords: Governance, Insecurity, New Public Governance, Public Administration, State Capacity,

INTRODUCTION

The primary duty of every modern state is the protection of lives and property as well as maintenance of law and order. Security therefore, constitutes one of the most critical indicators of state legitimacy, governance effectiveness and administrative competence (Oikhala, 2024). In contemporary governance discourse, the ability of a state to effectively manage insecurity reflects the broader question of state capacity and institutional performance. Across many developing countries, particularly in Africa, the increasing complexity of insecurity has exposed significant weaknesses in governance institutions and public administration systems.

Nigeria has experienced a persistent and multi-dimensional insecurity crisis over the past two decades. The country continues to grapple with Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East, other banditries and mass kidnapping in the North-West, farmer-herder conflicts in the North-Central region, oil militancy in the Niger Delta, separatist agitations in the South-East, cult violence, cybercrime, raping, yahooing-plus and urban criminality in the Southwest (Oikhala 2022). These security challenges have generated severe humanitarian, economic, political, and administrative consequences. Thousands of lives have been lost, millions of people displaced and many public infrastructures destroyed. Furthermore, insecurity has undermined public confidence in government institutions and weakened service delivery mechanisms across various sectors.

The persistence of insecurity in Nigeria has generated intense scholarly debates concerning the nature and capacity of the Nigerian state. Scholars argue that weak institutions, corruption, poor policy implementation, inadequate coordination among security agencies, political instability, and governance deficits have contributed significantly to the country's security challenges. The concept of state capacity has therefore emerged as a critical framework for understanding the effectiveness of governance systems in managing complex societal problems.

State capacity refers to the ability of the government to formulate and implement policies, enforce laws, maintain territorial control, mobilize resources, and provide essential public goods and services. In the context of insecurity management, state capacity includes the effectiveness of security institutions, administrative coordination, intelligence gathering, policy responsiveness, public accountability, and citizen engagement. A weak state often lacks the institutional mechanisms necessary to effectively respond to security threats, thereby creating governance vacuums that criminal and extremist groups exploit.

The Nigerian state faces numerous institutional and administrative limitations that affect its security management efforts. Despite huge budgetary allocations to external defence and internal security agencies, insecurity continues to worsen in several parts of the country. This has raised concerns regarding corruption, inefficiency, poor resource management, weak intelligence systems, inadequate personnel training, and lack of accountability within security institutions. In many rural communities, the absence of effective government presence has enabled non-state actors and criminal groups to dominate local spaces.

Public administration plays a central role in addressing insecurity because security governance depends largely on effective institutions, policy coordination, and administrative efficiency. But the changing nature of governance in the twenty-first century has shifted attention from traditional hierarchical government structures toward collaborative governance approaches involving multiple actors such as civil society organisations, local communities, private organisations, and international partners. This transformation is captured in the New Public Governance framework, which emphasizes institutional collaboration, networks, stakeholder participation, and shared responsibility in public service delivery. This paper therefore, examined state capacity and the management of insecurity in Nigeria from a public administration view. It seeks to explore how institutional weaknesses, governance deficits and administrative inefficiencies contribute to insecurity while it also identified strategies for strengthening governance capacity to improve national security management in Nigeria. Despite substantial investments in external and internal security administration, Nigeria continues to experience rising levels of insecurity across different regions. The persistence of terrorism, kidnapping, banditry, communal conflicts, and organised criminality suggests significant weaknesses in the institutional and administrative capacity of the Nigerian state. Public concerns regarding corruption, poor policy implementation, weak coordination among security agencies, inadequate intelligence systems, and political interference further indicate structural governance deficiencies.

Existing studies have examined insecurity mainly from political, police, military and socioeconomic perspectives. But limited scholarly attention has been devoted to understanding insecurity as a public administration and governance problem linked to state dimensions and institutional performance. Hence, there is a need for a comprehensive analysis of how governance structures, administrative institutions, and public sector effectiveness shape insecurity management in Nigeria. Towards the foregoing, the paper was determined to examine the relationship between state capacity and insecurity management in Nigeria; analyse the institutional and administrative factors contributing to insecurity in Nigeria; evaluate the role of public administration in national security governance; assess the relevance of New Public Governance theory in insecurity management; and recommends workable strategies for strengthening state capacity and improving security governance in Nigeria.

The paper contributes to scholarship in public administration, governance, and security studies by providing a comprehensive analysis of insecurity from a state capacity point of view. It also contributes theoretically by applying the New Public Governance framework to national security administration in Nigeria. Besides, it has immense benefit to policymakers, security agencies and public administration from the recommendations it provided for strengthening public governance institutions and improving collaborative security management. Again, with the paper focuses on state capacity and the management of insecurity in Nigeria, major insecurity challenges including terrorism and other banditries such as kidnapping, bloody communal conflicts and violence separatist agitations within the broader framework of public administration and governance are all beneficiaries from the paper outcome.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This paper adopted the New Public Governance theory as its theoretical framework for analysing state capacity and the management of insecurity in Nigeria. The increasing difficulty of security challenges in contemporary Nigerian state has made traditional bureaucratic governance approaches insufficient for curbing multi-dimensional insecurity problems. Therefore, public administration scholars have increasingly emphasised the collaborative governance, inclusiveness, responsiveness, intelligence-led, institutional networks, stakeholder engagement, and inter-organisational coordination as critical mechanisms for effective governance and public service delivery. In this sense, The New Public Governance theory postulated by Stephen P. Osborne in 2010, provided a useful analytical lens for understanding the relationship between state institutions, governance structures, and insecurity management in Nigeria.

Nonetheless, the concept of governance has undergone critical transformation over the past four decades. The Traditional Public Administration that dominated early twentieth century, emphasised the hierarchical administration with focuses on bureaucratic authority, centralised control and adherence to rules and procedures; it then, had criticisms concerning inefficiency, rigidity, excessive bureaucracy and poor service delivery, which led to the emergence of New Public Management during the 1980s and 1990s. This has promoted private-sector managerial techniques, market-oriented reforms, decentralisation, performance measurement and chatting ways for efficiency-driven governance. Notwithstanding the significant contributions of New Public Management to public sector reforms, scholars increasingly observed that market-based governance models were still appeared inadequate for addressing complex societal problems, which include insecurity arising from terrorism, climate change, social inequality, and transnational crime. These challenges often concerned with multiple actors, institutional interdependence and collaborative decision-making processes among others that cannot be effectively managed through hierarchical bureaucracy or market competition alone. This limitation led to the emergence of New Public Governance as a more comprehensive governance framework.

New Public Governance emerged prominently in public administration scholarship during the early twenty-first century through the works of scholars such as Stephen P. Osborne, Guy B. Peters and Jan Kooiman. The theory emphasises that governance in contemporary societies is no longer the exclusive responsibility of government institutions alone. Instead, governance should involve interactions among multiple actors such as government agencies, civil society organisations, private sector institutions, local communities, international organisations and non-state actors. According to Osborne (2010), New Public Governance reflects the increasing pluralisation and complexity of governance systems in modern societies where policy implementation depends heavily on institutional collaboration and networked relationships.

The central assumption of New Public Governance is that public problems are increasingly complex and interconnected, requiring collaborative governance mechanisms rather than isolated state actions. Unlike the Traditional Public Administration that prioritises and practised centralised authority that is similar to New Public Management, which emphasises the market competition, New Public Governance focuses on governance networks, institutional partnerships, citizen participation, and shared accountability. Through this, Governance therefore, has been made to become a collective process involving negotiation, coordination, and cooperation among multiple stakeholders.

In the context of insecurity management, New Public Governance recognises that security challenges cannot be addressed solely through military force or traditional and reactive policing structures. Thus, effective security governance requires cooperation among federal institutions, local governments, intelligence agencies, civil society organisations, traditional institutions, community leaders, and citizens. Security management as it were, therefore, becomes a multidimensional governance process concerning with coordination, information sharing, trust-building, and institutional integration.

The usefulness of New Public Governance to insecurity management in Nigeria is particularly significant because many security threats confronting the country are deeply rooted in governance failures, institutional weaknesses, socioeconomic inequalities, and administrative inefficiencies. Boko Haram insurgency, kidnapping, farmer-herder conflicts and separatist agitations are not merely military problems but broader governance challenges linked to unemployment, poverty, corruption, weak institutions, marginalisation, and poor public service delivery. One of the key principles of New Public Governance is network governance. Network governance is used to refer to the interconnected relationships among governmental and non-governmental actors in the formulation and implementation of public policies.

According to Peters (2022), governance networks enable public institutions to mobilise resources, share information, coordinate strategies and enhance policy effectiveness. In security governance, network collaboration among security agencies, local communities, intelligence institutions and civil society organisations enhances information gathering, conflict prevention, and early warning systems.

In Nigeria, weak inter-agency coordination has significantly undermined effective insecurity management. As stated in Oikhala (2025), security has to do with protection of lives and property. It is also has to do with safe-preservation that implies a stable, relative and predictable state in which an individual or group would pursue its legitimate goals without fear or disruption, or harms of any kind. To this end, security institutions often operate independently with limited information sharing and poor policy coordination. Rivalries among security agencies, duplication of responsibilities and bureaucratic fragmentation weaken institutional effectiveness and reduce operational efficiency. The New Public Governance theory therefore, highlights the significance of collaborative institutional arrangements for improving security governance outcomes. To put it differently, the New Public Governance is known to be citizen participation and stakeholder engagement governance paradigm. So, such contemporary governance system increasingly recognises that citizens are not passive recipients of public services but active participants in governance processes to promote public trust, legitimacy, and accountability, which are key for effective governance. With this, successful insecurity management structure therefore, requires active collaboration between state institutions and local communities.

The shift from traditional public administration paradigm with its associated ancient governance system has brought about increasing community-based security initiatives, which have become increasingly important in Nigeria due to the inability of centralised security institutions to adequately address local security challenges. Hence, regional or zonal security outfits such as Amotekun in the South-West and Community Vigilante Groups in the various parts of the country reflect the growing demands for participatory security governance structures. These initiatives are aligned with the New Public Governance theory that advocated for local participation, collaborative governance and institutional flexibility. The theory also canvassed for accountability and transparency as critical dimensions for governance effectiveness. As it noted, weak accountability mechanisms within public institutions contribute to corruption, resource diversion, abuse of power and policy failure. In Nigeria today, allegations of unethical practices such as corruption within security institutions have undermined public trust and weakened state legitimacy. Reports of embezzlement of defence funds, procurement irregularities and misuse of security budgets have raised concerns regarding institutional accountability and governance effectiveness (Adeniji, 2026).

Unfortunately, corruption weakens state capacity by diverting resources away from essential public services and undermining institutional performance. According to Bamigboye and Fakunle (2026), corruption remains one of the greatest obstacles to effective public administration in Nigeria because it reduces policy implementation capacity and weakens public confidence in governance institutions. From the New Public Governance perspective, transparency, institutional accountability, and collaborative oversight mechanisms are necessary for strengthening governance capacity and improving security administration.

Another important dimension of New Public Governance is policy coordination. Modern governance challenges require integrated policy responses involving multiple sectors and institutions. Insecurity management therefore, requires coordination across defence, education, economic development, social welfare, justice administration and local governance system. Security threats are usually symptoms of broader socio-economic and political problems. However, effective insecurity management must involve comprehensive governance reforms rather than purely military solutions (Nwagboso, 2021; Oikhala, 2025).

The Nigerian state has historically relied heavily on militarised approaches to insecurity management. However, the persistence of insecurity despite increased military spending demonstrates the limitations of coercive strategies in addressing structural governance problems. New Public Governance theory canvassed for preventive governance strategies, which focused on social inclusion, institutional development, conflict resolution, community engagement and responsive public service delivery. Beyond the foregoing, the New Public Governance highlights the importance of adaptive governance. Governance institutions must possess the flexibility and administrative capacity necessary to respond to rapidly changing societal conditions. The current insecurity threats such as cybercrime, transnational terrorism, organised criminal networks, and digital radicalisation require innovative governance mechanisms and

technological adaptation. Weak technological infrastructure and limited intelligence capacity have however constrained Nigeria's ability to effectively respond to emerging security threats. In other words, the theory is relevant in explaining the growing role of non-state actors in governance processes. So, in many developing countries, civil society organisations, humanitarian agencies, traditional rulers, religious institutions, and community groups increasingly complement government efforts in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and security management. In Nigeria, local communities used to rely on informal governance structures due to limited government presence in rural areas. This demonstrates the importance of collaborative governance arrangements in strengthening state legitimacy and improving service delivery (Oikhala, 2024).

Regardless of its relevance, the New Public Governance has also attracted criticisms. Some scholars had argued that excessive dependence on networks and partnerships can weaken governmental authority and create accountability problems. Other scholars contended that governance networks can be dominated by powerful actors, thereby marginalising vulnerable groups (Abraham *et al*, 2026). Moreover, it can be insinuated also, that weak institutional environments may limit the effectiveness of collaborative governance mechanisms in developing countries. In relation to Nigeria, institutional fragility, political patronage, ethnic divisions and corruption have continued to undermine collaborative governance efforts. This has in turn weakened trust among institutional and political actors that is affecting coordination and policy implementation. Nevertheless, the New Public Governance framework remains highly relevant because it provides a broader understanding of governance beyond traditional state-centric approaches.

Summarily, this paper adopted the New Public Governance theory to explain how institutional collaboration, stakeholder participation, accountability, policy coordination, and governance networks impact insecurity management in Nigeria. The framework had provided a comprehensive basis for analysing the limitations of state capacity and identifying governance reforms necessary for strengthening national security administration. In its application, the New Public Governance to Nigeria's insecurity challenges demonstrates that sustainable security management needs more than military interventions. It necessitates institutional strengthening, collaborative governance, citizen engagement, openness, and effective policy coordination across multiple governance sectors are feasible. On the final note, strengthening state capacity within the framework of collaborative governance becomes key for improving insecurity management and enhancing governance effectiveness in Nigeria (Oikhala, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

State Capacity

The concept of state capacity occupies a central stance in governance, political science and public administration scholarship. State capacity as it is used in this paper, is referred to the ability of the Nigerian state to formulate policies, implement decisions, maintain law and order, mobilise resources, provide public services and maintain legitimacy within its territorial boundaries (Oikhala, 2024). According to Fukuyama (2020), state capacity reflects the institutional competence of government structures to effectively perform administrative and regulatory responsibilities. Similarly, Hanson and Sigman (2021) conceptualise state capacity as the ability of public institutions to penetrate society, enforce laws, coordinate governance activities, and sustain political authority. In contemporary governance discourse, state capacity has become increasingly significant in explaining development outcomes, institutional effectiveness, and security management in developing countries. Weak state capacity has usually manifested in poor service delivery, corruption, lopsided law enforcement, institutional inefficiency, and inability to control violence. Insecurity therefore becomes both a symptom and consequence of weak governance institutions. Besides, state capacity consists of several dimensions including administrative capacity, coercive capacity, fiscal capacity and political capacity. Administrative capacity has to do with the effectiveness of public institutions in policy implementation and service delivery. Fiscal capacity is all about the ability of the state to mobilise financial resources through taxation and revenue generation (Anthony & Oikhala, 2025). For Tijani (2022) and Oladeji (2022), coercive capacity concerns the ability of the state to maintain law and order through security institutions, while political capacity relates to legitimacy, accountability, and citizen trust.

In Nigeria, state capacity challenges are reflected in weak institutional coordination, corruption, inadequate infrastructure, poor public service delivery, and rising insecurity. Despite substantial security budgets, governance institutions continued to struggle with policy implementation and effective security

management. Recent studies indicated that institutional weaknesses and governance failures remain major obstacles to national development and security administration in Nigeria (Bamigboye & Fakunle, 2026, Oikhala, 2019). Scholars argued further that effective state capacity depends heavily on institutional professionalism, bureaucratic competence, transparency, and policy coordination. Gombe and Mackson (2022) emphasise that competent public personnel and effective administrative structures are critical for improving governance outcomes and service delivery in Nigeria. Weak personnel management systems, politicisation of public institutions, and inadequate training significantly undermine governance effectiveness.

Insecurity

According to Oikhala (2022), insecurity refers to the condition in which individuals, communities, and states experience threats or disturbances to lives, property, political stability, and socio-economic wellbeing. Security is one of the fundamental responsibilities of the state because it guarantees social order, economic development, and political stability. According to Nwagboso (2021), insecurity involves the absence of safety, peace, and protection from threats such as terrorism, crime, communal conflicts, and violence. Nigeria has experienced multiple dimensions of insecurity over the past two decades. These include Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, farmer-herder conflicts, militancy, separatist agitations, cybercrime, piracy, cult violence, and organised criminality. These security challenges have generated severe humanitarian and developmental consequences (Oikhala, 2021). As further noted in Oikhala (2025), the North-East region has remained heavily affected by Boko Haram insurgency since 2009. The insurgency has caused thousands of deaths, displacement of millions, destruction of infrastructure, and disruption of economic activities. Similarly, the North-West zone of Nigeria has been experiencing rising banditry including kidnapping, particularly in states like Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, and Sokoto. Their rural communities have increasingly become vulnerable due to weak government presence and inadequate security deployment. Of course, the rising insecurity is not limited to the two zones in the foregoing discourse (Oikhala, 2019 & Oikhala). North Central has been besieged with barbaric herdsmen attack and displacement; while, Southeast, South-South and Southwest zones have been suffering kidnapping, violence separatist agitation, oil militancy, yahooing plus, killings, rape for money rituals and other heinous crimes are predominant. Abraham *et al.*, (2026) argue that ungoverned and under-governed rural spaces significantly contribute to insecurity in Nigeria because criminal groups exploit areas with weak state presence. Their findings demonstrate that poor deployment of security technologies and weak rural governance structures have increased insecurity across several Nigerian communities.

The herdsmen conflicts also constitute a major source of insecurity in Nigeria. Competition over land resources, climate change, population growth, and weak conflict management mechanisms have intensified communal violence in several regions. In the South-East, separatist agitations and attacks on government institutions have further weakened security governance and disrupted socioeconomic activities. Insecurity in Nigeria has profound implications for governance and development. It discourages investment, reduces agricultural productivity, increases unemployment, disrupts education, and weakens public confidence in government institutions.

Public Administration and Security Governance

Public administration plays a central role in national security governance because effective insecurity management depends largely on institutional coordination, policy implementation, administrative efficiency, and public accountability. Security governance extends beyond military operations to include public policy coordination, institutional management, community engagement, and intergovernmental collaboration. Contemporary governance systems increasingly recognise that insecurity cannot be addressed solely through centralized military approaches. Instead, collaborative governance involving multiple stakeholders has become essential. The New Public Governance framework emphasises partnerships among government institutions, civil society organisations, local communities, and non-state actors in addressing complex societal challenges (Oikhala, 2024)

In Nigeria, security governance has been weakened by institutional fragmentation, poor inter-agency coordination, corruption, and bureaucratic inefficiency. Security agencies often operate independently with limited information sharing and overlapping responsibilities. This institutional fragmentation undermines operational efficiency and policy effectiveness. Adeniji (2026) argues that centralized

policing structures in Nigeria have proven inadequate for addressing contemporary security challenges. The study advocates hybrid security governance models involving community participation and decentralised policing arrangements. Community-based security initiatives such as Amotekun and local vigilante groups have emerged largely due to public dissatisfaction with centralized security systems. The persistence of insecurity despite increasing security expenditure also raises concerns regarding corruption and accountability within public institutions. Bamigboye and Fakunle (2026) observe that corruption undermines public administration effectiveness by diverting resources, weakening institutional credibility, and reducing policy implementation capacity. Procurement irregularities, misuse of defence funds, and political interference continue to weaken security institutions in Nigeria. Furthermore, weak local government institutions contribute significantly to insecurity management challenges. Local governments are expected to facilitate grassroots governance, community engagement, and local security coordination. However, inadequate autonomy, poor funding, and political interference limit their effectiveness. Ikpebe *et al.* (2026) note that weak local government autonomy undermines governance effectiveness and policy responsiveness in Nigeria.

Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have examined the relationship between governance, insecurity, and institutional capacity in Nigeria. Tijani (2022) investigated the relationship between good governance and terrorism in Nigeria. The study found that governance failures, poverty, corruption, unemployment, and institutional weaknesses significantly contribute to terrorism and insecurity. The study concluded that improving governance quality and public accountability is necessary for sustainable insecurity management. Similarly, Oladeji (2022) examined the implications of high governance costs and executive dominance on development outcomes in Nigeria. The study revealed that excessive governance expenditures and political patronage reduce resources available for public service delivery and institutional development. Weak governance structures therefore contribute indirectly to insecurity and developmental challenges.

Abraham *et al.* (2026) analysed rural insecurity and ungoverned spaces in Nigeria between 2010 and 2022. Their study found that inadequate deployment of security infrastructure and weak rural governance structures increase vulnerability to violence and criminal activities. The study recommended improved rural governance systems and technological modernization of security administration. Research on police capacity and institutional effectiveness also highlights major administrative deficiencies in Nigeria's security governance structures. A 2026 study on police recruitment and training practices found that corruption, weak recruitment systems, inadequate training, and poor community relations significantly undermine policing effectiveness in Nigeria. The study emphasised the need for institutional reforms and capacity development within security agencies.

Studies on public service delivery similarly reveal strong relationships between governance effectiveness and institutional capacity. Gombe and Mackson (2022) argue that ineffective personnel management and poor administrative professionalism undermine governance outcomes at the local government level. Weak public administration systems therefore negatively affect policy implementation and service delivery.

Gap in Literature

Existing studies on insecurity in Nigeria have focused largely on military operations, terrorism, political instability, and socioeconomic factors. While some studies examine governance and institutional weaknesses, limited scholarly attention has been devoted to analysing insecurity specifically from a public administration and state capacity perspective within the framework of New Public Governance. More so, many studies emphasise security challenges without adequately exploring how collaborative governance, institutional coordination, administrative reforms, and stakeholder participation can strengthen insecurity management. This study therefore contributes to existing scholarship by integrating state capacity, public administration, and New Public Governance theory in explaining insecurity management in Nigeria. The paper further bridges the gap between governance theory and practical security administration by emphasising institutional reforms, collaborative governance mechanisms, accountability systems, and policy coordination as essential components of effective insecurity management.

METHODOLOGY

This paper utilised a qualitative research design based on documentary analysis and secondary data sources. The qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the study focuses on governance structures, institutional capacity, and insecurity management within the broader framework of public administration. Secondary data were obtained from academic journals, government publications, policy documents, books, newspapers, institutional reports, and credible online databases relating to insecurity, governance, and public administration in Nigeria.

The paper further relies on content analysis to examine the relationship between state capacity and insecurity management in Nigeria. Content analysis enables systematic examination of governance patterns, institutional weaknesses, public policies, and administrative challenges associated with national security management. The New Public Governance framework serves as the analytical lens for interpreting the findings. The theory provides a basis for examining collaborative governance, inter-agency coordination, institutional accountability, and stakeholder participation in insecurity management.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

State Capacity and Insecurity Management in Nigeria

The findings of this study reveal that weak state capacity remains one of the major factors contributing to persistent insecurity in Nigeria. The inability of the Nigerian state to effectively enforce laws, coordinate security institutions, provide public services, and maintain territorial control has created governance gaps that criminal groups increasingly exploit.

One of the major indicators of weak state capacity in Nigeria is poor institutional coordination among security agencies. Effective insecurity management requires collaboration among the military, police, intelligence agencies, civil defence organisations, immigration authorities, and local governance institutions. However, findings indicate that rivalry, duplication of responsibilities, bureaucratic fragmentation, and poor communication frequently undermine security operations.

The paper found out that despite increased budgetary allocations to defence and security administration, insecurity continues to intensify in many regions of the country. This suggests that financial resources alone cannot guarantee effective security governance without institutional accountability and administrative efficiency. Corruption within public institutions significantly weakens security administration because resources meant for operational effectiveness are often diverted through procurement irregularities and political patronage systems.

The findings also indicated that weak local governance structures contribute substantially to insecurity management failures. Many rural communities experience limited government presence, inadequate policing, poor infrastructure, and weak intelligence networks. Criminal groups therefore exploit these governance vacuums to establish operational bases and carry out attacks.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that public distrust in government institutions undermines security governance effectiveness. Citizens are often reluctant to cooperate with security agencies due to concerns regarding corruption, abuse of power, and lack of accountability. Public confidence is essential for intelligence gathering, community policing, and collaborative governance.

Institutional Weaknesses and Administrative Challenges

Institutional weakness emerged as a major factor affecting insecurity management in Nigeria. Weak institutions are characterised by poor policy implementation, inadequate professionalism, insufficient training, corruption, and limited administrative capacity.

One major administrative challenge identified in the paper is inadequate personnel training within security institutions. Modern insecurity threats such as cybercrime, terrorism, transnational organised crime, and digital radicalisation require advanced technological expertise and intelligence capabilities. However, many security agencies continue to experience operational deficiencies due to outdated equipment, inadequate training, and weak technological infrastructure.

The paper further found out that political interference significantly undermines institutional effectiveness. Security appointments, resource allocations, and operational decisions are sometimes influenced by political considerations rather than professionalism and merit. Political patronage weakens institutional autonomy and reduces operational efficiency.

Further important finding concerns with weak intelligence systems. Effective insecurity management depends heavily on intelligence gathering, information sharing, and early warning mechanisms. However,

intelligence coordination among Nigerian security institutions remains inadequate. Weak surveillance systems and limited technological modernization reduce the ability of security agencies to proactively address security threats.

The paper equally found corruption as a major obstacle to state capacity and security governance. Corruption weakens institutions by diverting public resources, reducing morale among public officials, and undermining public trust. Reports of embezzlement of defence funds and procurement fraud have negatively affected operational efficiency within security institutions.

Socio-economic Factors and Insecurity

The findings of this paper, further demonstrated that insecurity in Nigeria is closely linked to broader socio-economic and governance challenges. High unemployment rates, poverty, social exclusion, youth marginalisation, and inequality create conditions that facilitate criminality and violent extremism.

Youth unemployment particularly was found to have contributed to insecurity because unemployed youths become vulnerable to recruitment by terrorist organisations, criminal gangs, and armed groups. In regions affected by poverty and weak governance, insecurity often becomes both an economic activity and a means of survival.

Furthermore, the paper found out that poor public service delivery has contributed to public dissatisfaction and weakened state legitimacy. Inadequate healthcare, education, infrastructure and social welfare systems that have created perceptions of governance failure. Based on this, some communities are increasingly relying on informal security arrangements and non-state actors for protection.

The paper found out that climate change and environmental pressures further have intensified insecurity challenges. Thus, the deepening herdsman crisis in Nigeria has linked to desertification, migration and weak conflict resolution mechanisms of public governance as a result of a weak governance structures and inadequate policy implementation or coordination that had exacerbated to hard tensions.

New Public Governance and colLabour ative Security Management

The findings strongly support the relevance of the New Public Governance framework in insecurity management. The present security challenges are too complex to be addressed solely through traditional non-inclusive state governance structures. Effective security governance increasingly needs colLabour ation among multiple actors including government institutions, civil society organisations, traditional rulers, local communities, private organisations, and international partners.

Community policing initiatives and regional security outfits were found out to demonstrate the growing importance of colLabour ative governance in Nigeria. Hence, security initiatives such as Amotekun in South-West Nigeria reflects public demands for participatory security governance system in Nigeria (Oikhala, 2022). So, community participation improves intelligence gathering, strengthens trust and enhances local security coordination.

The paper found out that institutional colLabour ation significantly enhances governance effectiveness. Thus, security governance needs coordination across education, economic development, justice administration, social welfare and local government systems. It discovered that integrated policy approaches are necessary for addressing the structural causes of insecurity.

Moreover, transparency and accountability were found as essential components of effective colLabour ative governance processes. Public trust increases when institutions demonstrate professionalism, fairness, transparency and accountability in security operations. Therefore, corruption and abuse of power weaken legitimacy and reduce citizen cooperation.

Implications for Public Administration

The findings of this paper have essential implications for public administration in Nigeria. First, the doggedness and fearful nature of insecurity in Nigeria have demonstrated the urgent need for institutional reforms and administrative modernisation within public institutions to strengthen the state capacity, which entails improvements in personnel management, policy coordination, technological modernisation, and accountability processes.

Second, insecurity management should be viewed not only as a police or military responsibility but as a governance and administrative issue that involves everybody Tijani (2022) and Oladeji (2022). Public administration institutions must therefore, prioritise colLabour ative governance, community engagement, and inter-agency coordination.

Third, effective insecurity management involves the strengthening of local governance. Local governments should be empowered politically, financially and administratively to support grassroots security coordination and community development.

Finally, public sector reforms aimed at reducing corruption, improving professionalism and strengthening transparency are necessary for improving governance effectiveness and restoring public confidence in state institutions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper examined state capacity and the management of insecurity in Nigeria from a public administration perspective using the New Public Governance framework. The findings reveal that weak institutional capacity, corruption, poor inter-agency coordination, weak local governance structures, and inadequate public accountability significantly undermine insecurity management in Nigeria.

The paper also established that insecurity in Nigeria has extended beyond military and national policing challenges to include broader governance and administrative problems. Weak state institutions, poor service delivery, socioeconomic inequalities, and governance deficits create conditions that facilitate insecurity and weaken state legitimacy. The New Public Governance framework provides a useful explanation for understanding the importance of collaborative governance, stakeholder participation, and institutional coordination in addressing the present security challenges. Effective and Sustainable insecurity management needed integrated governance approaches that entails government institutions, local communities, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders. Based on the above findings, the paper concluded that strengthening state capacity remains essential for improving governance effectiveness and insecurity management in Nigeria. Without effective institutions, accountability systems, administrative professionalism, and collaborative governance structures, insecurity is likely to persist despite increased security expenditures. Relying on the findings of the paper, the following recommendations were made for effective implementation.

1. The Nigerian government should strengthen its institutional capacity through public sector reforms, personnel training, technological modernisation, and improved administrative professionalism.
2. The Nigerian Security Agencies should improve inter-agency coordination, intelligence sharing and collaborative operational frameworks to promote security effectiveness.
3. Government should strengthen local governance institutions and encourage community-based security initiatives to improve grassroots security management.
4. Anti-corruption apparatuses within security institutions should be strengthened to improve accountability, transparency and public trust.
5. The government should invest in employment generation, poverty reduction, education, and social welfare programmes to address the socio-economic causes of insecurity in Nigeria.
6. Community participation and stakeholder engagement should be institutionalised within the national security governance frameworks.
7. Technological innovations such as covert surveillance system, digital intelligence platforms and data-driven security management should be expanded to improve operational efficiency.
8. Public administration institutions should adopt collaborative governance approaches that is consistent with the principles of New Public Governance.

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