

Influence of Security Challenges on the Management of Public Universities in North Central Nigeria

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Abstract: The study investigated the influence of security challenges on the management of public universities in the North Central Nigeria. Three specific objectives with corresponding research questions guided the study and three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study was 9,708 academic and senior administrative staff in seven Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. The sample size for the study was 384 academic and senior administrative staff who were drawn using purposive, proportionate stratified and convenience sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “Security Challenges and Management of Public Universities Questionnaire (SCMPUQ)”. The questionnaire was validated by experts and its reliability was established using Cronbach Coefficient Alpha Method which yielded a coefficient of 0.87. Data collected for the study was analyzed using Means and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions and Chi-Square Goodness of fit to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that armed banditry and cultism have significant negative influence on the management of public universities in North Central Nigeria. The study also revealed that ethnic crisis does not significantly influence the management of public universities. The study concluded that security challenges such as armed banditry and cultism in North Central Nigeria pose a great challenge to the management of public universities. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended among others that the Federal Government and university management should be proactive in creating and sustaining a peaceful, threat-free environment by providing sufficient surveillance vehicles that will be very useful in timely fighting and containment of armed banditry activities in university environment and the university management should tighten up measures to check cult activities on campuses and all identified cultists should be rusticated from the institution by the university management.

Keywords: University Education, Security Challenges, Armed Banditry, Cultism and Ethnic Crises and Management of Public Universities.

I. INTRODUCTION

Universities are unarguably the highest institutions of learning in the world. University is a fascinating institution with many faces: academic, scientific, social, cultural, economic, political, religious and commercial activities. As an important level of education around the world, university avails every nation of high level manpower necessary for national development. It helps to instill good attitudes and engenders attitudinal changes that are necessary for the socialization of

the individuals, thereby, leading to the modernization and overall transformation of the society. It is also clear that a functional university system helps through teaching and concise research, in the creation, absorption, dissemination and application of knowledge. The welfare of citizens of any nation is closely tied to the quality and outreach of their university systems.

As a country, Nigeria has made heavy investment in university education. To Nyamngee (2020), the aims and objectives of university education in Nigeria are to: contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society; develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments; acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society. Others are to promote and encourage scholarship and community service; forge and cement national unity and promote national and international understanding and interaction. In order to achieve the aims and objectives for which these universities are set-up, each of the universities have a Governing Council tasked with the responsibility of management. Hence, of paramount importance in the realization of the objectives of university education in Nigeria is management.

Management as an integral part of the university is seen as the process of integrating the appropriate human and material resources that are made available and made effective for achieving the purposes of a programme. In relation to education, Idoko (2015) defines management as the process concerned with using methods, principles and practices to establish, develop and execute the goals, policies, plans and procedures necessary to attain the objectives of education. Management of university is therefore, a process of creating, maintaining, stimulating, controlling the university system to accomplish predetermined objectives. It involves certain functions and work activities that university managers perform to achieve the goals of the university. In the view of Okechukwu and Okechukwu (2011), university management efforts are primarily aimed at increasing manpower development, survival, profits and gains of the university. As an integrating mechanism which pulls policies and process together to achieve goals, university management is very important and has a vital bearing on how the quality of labour and manpower of the university are developed as well as on

national economic growth. The survival of a university is hence dependent largely on the quality of management or administrative services involved.

In Nigeria, the management of universities is seen to be bedeviled with a myriad of security challenges. This is why Otonko (2012) states that in spite of the pertinence of university education to any nation of the world its management in Nigeria has been confronted by many security woes. Corroborating this, Ogunode, Wama and Dilmurod (2020) state that insecurity is one of the challenges preventing management of educational programme in Nigeria. In North Central Nigeria, the zone has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity. The zone has been plagued with a plethora of security challenges among which are armed banditry, cultism and ethnic crises among others. It can be said that the prevalence of security challenges in this zone could pose a threat to the management of university education. This is because for any nation of the world to effectively educate her citizens for sustainable peace and development, it should be free from security challenges (Igbuzor, 2011). Education in this zone which is one of the major investment and determinants for economic growth and development is observed to be confronted with overwhelming security challenges. This could be why Uzuegbu-Wilson (2018) states that in the prevailing circumstances of insecurity, the safety and security of educational institutions and the entire community where the schools are located are no longer guaranteed. Prevalent among the security challenges of concern in this study that could pose threat to the management of university education in North Central Nigeria are armed banditry, cultism and ethnic crises

Armed banditry is a type of organized crime committed by outlaws typically involving the threat or use of violence. It refers to the incidences of armed robbery or allied violent crimes, such as kidnapping, cattle rustling, and village or market raids. To Okoli and Okpaleke (2014), it involves the use of force, or threat to that effect, to intimidate a person or a group of persons in order to rob, rape or kill. People of North Central Nigeria today are facing the ever increasing threat of banditry. According to Orikpe (2013), people are generally scared of working in places with high rates of armed banditry. The activities of armed bandits in North Central Nigeria had led to several cases of kidnapping in public universities. Just recently, information was received from the Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi that on 25/4/2021 at about 10.20pm, three (3) students were kidnapped within the school premises by unknown gunmen (Premium Times, April 26, 2021). Also, a senior lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Jos was kidnapped by gunmen on 9th June, 2021 (Nigerian Tribune, 9th June, 2021). This happened after a lecturer of the same University was kidnapped at his residence and later rescued by combined team of vigilante and police. Responding to these issues, the Chairman of the University of Jos branch of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) stated that the university management was not happy

over what is happening because this is the fourth time their colleagues were abducted within this year. As reported by Thisday Newspaper, June 11, 2021, the chairman of the union called on the authorities to find a solution to the problem to stop further abduction of lecturers in the university. It can be seen therefore that armed banditry has become a major security challenge in North Central of Nigeria and it is sufficed for one to suggest that the activities of bandits could affect the management of universities.

Aside armed banditry; cultism is another security challenge that could affect the management of universities in North Central Nigeria. Cultism is ritual practice by a group of people whose membership, admission, policy and initiation formalities as well as their mode of operations are done in secret and kept secret with their activities having negative effects on both members and non- members alike. The issue of cultism has in spite of many efforts at reducing it, soared up in the Nigeria's university institutions and has cast gloom over the educational sector (Udoh & Ikezu, 2015). To the authors, cultism is now firmly established in public discourse, reports of conflicts manifested in deadly violence between rival groups of cultists, vigilantes, or criminals on the one hand, and the wider university community on the other and it is becoming frequent news items from universities. The nature, scale and intensity of cult practices vary from one university to another, but without exception, wherever these practices gained roots, generate condition of fear, insecurity and paralysis of authority are palpable. From the campuses of Nigerian universities like Jos, Abuja and Makurdi, Udoh and Ikezu (2015) report that cultism has limbed academic staff and students, thereby directly affecting teaching, learning, and research in Nigerian Universities. Just recently, the Sun Newspaper reports that the management of University of Abuja suspended 24 students including seven final year students, who were arrested by the Police on March 15, 2020 for their involvement in cultist activities. (The Sun Newspaper, 22nd March, 2020). With this development, one is also tempted to suggest that cultism is a security challenge that may affect the management of universities.

Another security challenge of concern to this study is ethnic crises. Ethnic crises are conflicts or skirmishes that exist among and within different ethnic groups or communities and are characterized by destruction of property with some spates of killings. Ethnic crises according to Yusuf (2015) are conflicts between two or more contending ethnic groups. The North-Central Nigeria is characterized by ethnic diversity. Ethnicity, which has been a threat to national cohesion is also becoming manifest in Nigerian universities. Specifically, ethnicity is being curiously weaponised on appointments and even on influencing election outcomes into elective positions in the ivory towers in Nigerian Universities. As competency and meritocracy take the back seat, candidates from ethnic minorities hardly assume positions of leadership in today's universities (The Guardian Editorial Board, 22nd October, 2019). The Newspaper states that "ASUU, "allowing a tribal

crisis to determine the appointment of the top management staff of universities in Nigeria would destroy the country's citadel of learning". It has been observed that with the creation of more universities in Nigeria, academics often return to their enclaves; and scholars have started crossing from universities and moving to the ones in their states of origin to become professors and even vice-chancellors owing to ethnicism (The Guardian Editorial Board, 22nd October, 2019). This means that instead of being a place to use the best brains for national development, Nigerian universities are becoming battle grounds for ethnic jingoism. Hence, the sacrificing quality for ethnic interests in Universities could also affect the management of Universities.

From the foregoing therefore, North Central Nigeria can be seen as one of the regions in Nigeria that has witnessed a myriad of security challenges. In view of these challenges and their attendant effect on educational institutions in general, one could be right to suggest that the management of public universities in North Central Nigeria may not be without stress from these challenges. What this means is that the process of planning, organizing and directing activities of the university, effectively utilizing human and material resources, in order to accomplish the university's objectives may suffer a setback. In view of this, the researcher sought to investigate the influence of security challenges on the management of public universities in North Central Nigeria.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers over the years have delved into the influence of security challenges on educational management. Okwe (2013) investigated the impact of armed robberies and kidnapping on staff recruitment in Imo state of Nigeria. The study revealed that high frequency level of armed robberies discourages job seekers from picking up appointments in educational institutions. Ekpoh, Edet and Ukpong (2020) conducted a study titled "Security Challenges in Universities: Implications for Safe School Environment". The study found that the kidnapping activities of bandits/unknown gunmen were among the most prevalent security challenges that pose threats to university management. Another study conducted by Oladunjoye and Omemu (2013) on the effect of Boko Haram insurgency on school attendance in Northern Nigeria found that the activities of insurgents like killings and kidnapping negatively influence school attendance. A study by Ukpor (2014) on kidnapping and effective management of schools in Cross River State, Nigeria found that kidnapping for ransom has significant influence on the economy of schools thereby making the management of schools very difficult.

Udoh and Ikezu (2015) conducted a research on the "Causes, effects, influence and strategies for eradicating cultism among students in tertiary institutions in Nnandi Azikiwe University, Awka, in Anambra State, Nigeria". The study found that the effects of cultism in tertiary institutions are the destruction of lives and properties of both staff and students of the institutions; spread of diseases like immune deficiency

syndrome from blood sucking during their oath taking and the decline in academic performance of cult members. A study by Chibuzor (2013) on cult groups in Nigerian public universities-recruitment and initiation processes: a case study of Ebonyi State University found that the recruitment and initiation of students on campuses have much negative implications on education and the society. Another study conducted by Enumba (2012) found that cultism brought about a lot of indiscipline problems in the tertiary institutions; such disciplinary problems included examination malpractices, intimidation of staff, maiming of fellow students and creation of unstable environment for both staff and students because of cult activities. It was also found that Cultism has become so daring and violent in educational institutions (particularly the higher ones) such that their activities disrupt school calendars; make members of the management and academic communities to live in fear and anxiety of the unknown. Ushe (2019) in a study titled "cultism and violence in Nigerian Universities: A Paradigm for Achieving Religious Academic Excellence" discusses the impacts of cultism and other forms of violence on university campuses in Nigeria as a search for achieving sustainable peace and academic excellence. The study found that rivalry between cult groups and the wider campus community has drastically affected educational or academic performance of students in contemporary Nigerian society. Hemen (2010) carried out an investigative study on the impact of Jukun-Tiv Riots on the management of secondary schools in Taraba State, Nigeria. The study found that the Jukun-Tiv riots significantly affected maintenance of school infrastructural facilities in the State. Hemen (2010) further reported that the long period when schools closed due to ethnic crises seriously affected academic activities as well as the state of the facilities.

2.1 Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria today, no day passes by without reports of people being killed and properties worth millions of naira destroyed. The arbitrary bombing and fighting to take charge of some parts of the country by insurgency are some of the activities that are claiming lives and properties of this nation day by day. Kidnapping by bandits for ransom and other ritual activities, armed banditry, cultism and ethnic crises have become the order of the day in the country. The increasing rate of armed banditry, cultism and ethnic crises in recent times is capable of destroying the nation's material, financial and human resources, which might have been of assistance to the educational management and development of the country. Due to these, management of universities may be a difficult task since school managers may not know what to do in the midst of the volatile activities found in the schools which make human lives and school properties insecure and exposed to all kinds of risks. Now, the security challenges in Nigeria, particularly in the North Central Nigeria make one wonder how teaching and learning would take place effectively in such volatile and insecure school

environments. It also makes one wonder if the entire country particularly higher institutions' environments are still safe and manageable for the achievement of educational goals.

The researcher is worried whether or not the security challenges have influence on management of higher institutions, particularly public universities in North Central Nigeria. It is in view of the above that the researcher intended to find out the influence of security challenges particularly armed banditry, cultism and ethnic crises on the management of public universities in North Central Nigeria.

2.2 Objective of the Study

Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Determine the influence of armed banditry on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria
- ii. Ascertain the influence of cultism on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria
- iii. Find out the influence of ethnic crises on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria

2.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. How does armed banditry influence the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria?
- ii. How does cultism influence the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria?
- iii. How do ethnic crises influence the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria?

2.4 Statement of Hypotheses

- i. Armed banditry has no significant influence on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria
- ii. Cultism has no significant influence on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria

- iii. Ethnic crises has no significant influence on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria

III.METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprises 9,708 academic and senior administrative staff within the seven federal universities in North Central Nigeria. The population was made up of all 4,378 academic staff on Consolidated University Academic Salary Structure (CONUASS) 1-7 and 5,330 senior administrative staff on the Consolidated Tertiary Institutions' Salary Structure (CONTISS) 7 and above. The sample size for the study was 384 academic and senior administrative staff. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane formula. In selecting the sample, purposive, proportionate stratified and accidental sampling techniques were adopted. The researcher employed a structured questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire titled "Security Challenges and Management of Public Universities Questionnaire (SCMPUQ)" had three sections, section A, B and C. The questionnaire was validated by experts in Educational Administration and Planning and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach Alpha method and a reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of Means and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions while Chi-Square Goodness of Fit test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A benchmark of 2.50 was used to answer the research questions. Items with mean scores of 2.50 and above were agreed while those below 2.50 were disagreed. For the Chi-square test of hypotheses, the decision was based on P-values and Alpha values. When $P < .05$, the null hypothesis was rejected and considered "Significant Influence" and when $P > .05$, the null hypothesis was not rejected and considered "No Significant Influence".

IV.RESULTS

Research Question 1: How does armed banditry influence the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of responses on the influence of armed banditry on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	The rate of armed banditry in my state often discourages students from seeking for admission in my institution.	103	179	67	35	2.91	.89	Agree
2	Sexual harassment by kidnapers often leads to unwanted pregnancy among students and this increases dropout rate in my institution	189	112	61	22	3.22	.94	Agree
3	The forcible abduction of lecturers creates unsecured environment in my institution	74	180	100	30	3.04	.84	Agree
4	Constant threat from armed bandits in my state is one of the major reasons for staff refusing to take up appointment in my universities.	70	171	118	25	3.05	.84	Agree
5	Money that is meant for the engagement of more qualified staff is used for compensating staff affected by armed banditry attacks.	101	134	93	56	2.73	1.01	Agree

6	The psychological effect of abducted people lingers on even after regaining freedom and this negatively affect staff output in my institution	63	181	99	41	2.69	.87	Agree
Cluster Mean and SD						2.94	.90	Agree

Result presented in Table 1 revealed that, the respondents agreed to all the items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) with mean scores ranging from 2.69 – 3.22 which are above the benchmark of 2.50. The cluster mean of all the items was revealed to be 2.94 and SD= .90. With this grand mean, it can be deduced from

this finding that armed banditry has negative influence on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria

Research Question 2: How does cultism influence the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of responses on the influence of cultism on the management of public universities in North Central

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
7	Students use cult activities as instrument for academic excellence by creating fear for staff.	185	137	49	13	3.29	.90	Agree
8	Intimidation of staff by cult members affects negatively affect lectures morale in my institution.	188	125	50	21	3.25	1.01	Agree
9	Struggle for power among cultists affects academic performance of their members.	181	141	46	16	3.27	.88	Agree
10	Killings resulting from cult activities affect the enrolment rate of students in my institution.	187	131	52	14	3.28	1.03	Agree
11	Students who give much of their time to cult activities hardly attend their lessons and pass their examinations.	178	141	47	18	3.25	.99	Agree
12	Initiation process of cult members leads some of them to become school dropouts thereby reducing my school population.	175	150	42	17	3.26	.86	Agree
Cluster Mean and SD						3.27	.95	Agree

Result presented in Table 2 revealed that, the respondents agreed to all the items (7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12) with mean scores ranging from 3.25 – 3.29 which are all above the benchmark of 2.50. The cluster mean of all the items was revealed to be 3.27 and SD= .95. With this cluster mean, it

can be deduced from this finding that cultism has negative influence on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria

Research Question 3: How do ethnic crises influence the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of responses on the influence of ethnic crises on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
13	Some projects under construction are abandoned as a result of ethnic crises in my institution	51	118	162	53	2.43	.92	Disagree
14	Some projects are destroyed in the process of ethnic crises in my institution.	64	112	158	50	2.49	1.01	Disagree
15	As a result of ethnic crises, appointment in my institution are often based on ethnic sentiments	101	134	93	56	2.73	.83	Agree
16	Labourers employed for execution of projects in my institution run away from sites as a result of ethnic crises.	59	89	185	51	2.41	.99	Disagree
17	Due to ethnic crises, admission of students is often based on ethnic bias in my institution	63	181	99	41	2.69	.88	Agree
18	Ethnic crises make school property to be cartaway by looters in my institution	55	70	162	97	2.21	1.10	Disagree
Cluster Mean and SD						2.49	.96	Disagree

Result presented in Table 3 revealed that, except for item 15 and 17, the respondents disagreed to the other items (13, 14, 16 and 18) with mean scores ranging from 2.21 – 2.49 which are below the benchmark of 2.50. The data also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .83 – 1.10 which

showed that the responses of the respondents were too far from each other. The cluster mean of all the items was revealed to be 2.49 and SD= .96. With this cluster mean, it can be deduced from this finding that ethnic crises do not have

influence on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria

Hypotheses 1: Armed banditry has no significant influence on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria

Table 4: Chi-Square Goodness of fit test of the influence of Armed Banditry on Management of Public Universities in North Central, Nigeria

Variables	N	Expected Value	Df	χ^2_{cal}	Sig	α -level	Remark
Armed Banditry							
	384	96	3	80.646	.000	.05	Significant
Management of Public Universities							

Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2_{cal} = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value,

Table 6 shows the Chi-square calculated value of 80.646, degree of freedom (df) =3 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value (α) of 0.05. Since $P < 0.05$, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that, armed banditry has significant influence on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria

Hypothesis 2: Cultism has no significant influence on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria

Table 5: Chi-Square Goodness of fit test of the influence of Cultism on Management of Public Universities in North Central, Nigeria

Variables	N	Expected Value	Df	χ^2_{cal}	Sig	α -level	Remark
Cultism							
	384	96	3	183.563	.000	.05	Significant
Management of Public Universities							

Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2_{cal} = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value,

Table 5 shows the Chi-square calculated value of 184.563, degree of freedom (df) =3 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value (α) of 0.05. Since $P < 0.05$, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that, cultism banditry has significant influence on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria

Hypothesis 3: Ethnic crises have no significant influence on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria

Table 6: Chi-Square Goodness of fit test of the influence of Ethnic Crises on Management of Public Universities in North Central, Nigeria

Variables	N	Expected Value	Df	χ^2_{cal}	Sig	α -level	Remark
Ethnic Crises							
	384	96	3	52.021	.071	.05	Not Significant
Management of Public Universities							

Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2_{cal} = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value, $P <$

Table 6 shows the Chi-square calculated value of 52.021, degree of freedom (df) =3 and a sig (P-value=0.071) which is greater than the alpha value (α) of 0.05. Since $P > 0.05$, the result is not significant, therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that, ethnic crises have no significant influence on the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria

V. DISCUSSION

Firstly, the findings of the study revealed that armed banditry has negative influence on the management of public universities in North Central Nigeria. Majorly, it was revealed from this finding that sexual harassment by kidnappers leading to unwanted pregnancy among students, constant threat from armed bandits and the forcible abduction of lecturers has led to management challenges in public universities in North Central Nigeria. The test of related hypothesis revealed that armed banditry significantly influences the management of public universities. This finding agree with that of Okwe (2013) whose study revealed that high frequency level of armed robberies discourage job seekers from picking up appointments in the selected institutions. It sufficed to state that this discouragement can be seen to pose a threat to recruitment of quality staff that can steer the affairs of public universities. The finding also corroborates that of Ekpoh, Edet and Ukpogong (2020) who found that the kidnapping activities of bandits/unknown gunmen was one of the most prevalent security challenges that pose threats to university management. In further corroboration with this finding is the finding of Oladunjoye and Omemu (2013) that the activities of insurgents like killings and kidnapping negatively influence school attendance. The report by Ukpogong (2014) whose research showed that kidnapping for ransom has significant influence on the economy of schools thereby making the management of schools very difficult is also in corroboration with the findings of the present study. The findings of this study as observed could be why Paulson (2011) states that the practice of abducting staff influences the management of public universities in areas where staff have been abducted. It can be said that due to the kidnapping activities of armed bandits, some money that could have been used to aid the public

universities were used instead in paying ransom of victims of armed bandits. In recent times, in North Central Nigeria, the university system has come under violent attacks, as bandits target schools to kidnap students and lecturers at will. The effect of these attacks has further exacerbated the fragile school system leading to poor management. It is established that in educational system, peace and tranquility are antidotes for effective management. However, with the activities of armed bandits in recent times, it is enough to state that management of public universities is bound to suffer until efforts are made to bring this manace to the barest minimum.

The second finding of the study revealed that cultism has negative influence on the management of public universities in North Central Nigeria. It was revealed from this finding that students' use cult activities as instrument for academic excellence, killings resulting from cult activities and struggle for power among cultists has led to management challenges in public universities in North Central Nigeria. A related test of hypothesis revealed that cultism significantly influences the management of public universities negatively. This finding corroborate that of Udoh and Ikezu (2015) who reported that effects of cultism in tertiary institutions are the destruction of lives and properties of both staff and students of the institutions, spread of diseases like immune deficiency syndrome from blood sucking during their oath taking and the decline in academic performance of cult members. The finding is also in agreement with that of Chibuzor (2013) who found that the recruitment and initiation of students on campuses have much negative implications on education and the society. Further, the findings are in tandem with that of Enumba (2012) who found that cultism brought about a lot of indiscipline problems in the tertiary institutions; such disciplinary problems included examination malpractices, intimidation of staff, maiming of fellow students and creation of unstable environment for both staff and students because of cult activities. Cultism has become so daring and violent in educational institutions (particularly the higher ones) such that their activities disrupt school calendars; make members of the management and academic communities to live in fear and anxiety of the unknown. Feuds and factions among rival groups have led to cropping up of several cult groups that often engage in reprisal attacks and display of sophisticated weapons which cause unnecessary damage on campuses. In cultist-hit campuses, offices are sometimes set ablaze which burn off vital management information and data that could be used for effective curricula planning, organization and implementation. Accordingly, the findings agree with that of Ushe (2019) who found that rivalry between cult groups and the wider campus community has drastically affected educational or academic performance of students in contemporary Nigerian society. The findings of the present study entail that frequent outbreak of cult wars in public universities in North Central Nigeria have generated feelings of fear, tension and social insecurity among students and lecturers thus leading to management problems. The activities

of the secret cults have negative influence on the management of academic programmes and sometimes lead to the closure of schools. This is detrimental to not only the well-being of the students but also to university management as facilities destroyed attract fiscal implications.

Further, the findings of the study revealed that ethnic crises do not have influence on management of public universities in North Central Nigeria. From this finding, the respondents revealed that during ethnic crises, school properties are not carted away by looters, labourers employed for execution of projects do not run away from sites and projects under construction are not abandoned. In confirmation of this finding, a related test of hypothesis revealed that ethnic crises hence do not significantly influence the management of public universities. This finding does not corroborate that of Hemen (2010) who found that the Jukun-Tiv riots significantly affected maintenance of school infrastructural facilities in the State. Hemen (2010) further reported that the long period when schools closed due to ethnic crises seriously affected academic activities as well as the state of the facilities also disagree with the findings of this study. This disagreement between the findings could be because North Central is not highly affected by ethnic crises compared to Taraba State in North Eastern Nigeria where the study by Hemen (2010) was carried out. This finding entail that ethnic crises do not pose a threat to management either in terms of how ethnic group compete for the location and management of tertiary institutions. This finding could be that ethnic crises being a security challenge, is not prevalent in North Central Nigeria to an extent that it affect the management of public universities.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that, security challenges in North Central Nigeria pose a great challenge to the management of public universities. The major security challenges that exert significant influence on the management of public universities are armed banditry and cultism. These spectra and wave of security challenges have led to significant problems on management in that public universities are now sinking into a quagmire of perplexing problems despite the efforts made by Government in providing security to enhance the smooth of running educational activities.

Recommendations were made that:

- i. The Federal Government and university management should be proactive in creating and sustaining a peaceful, threat-free environment by providing sufficient surveillance vehicles that will be very useful in timely fighting and containment of armed banditry activities in university environment
- ii. The university management should tighten up measures to check cult activities on campuses and all identified cultists should be rusticated from the institution by the university management.

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