



ASSESSMENT OF THE CHALLENGES AFFECTING SECURITY INTELLIGENCE GATHERING IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF ONDO AND KADUNA STATES

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Abstract

The issue of insecurity has become a major challenge in Nigeria, and this has warranted the need for efficient methods of tackling this all-important problem. Intelligence gathering, which is the procurement of vital and relevant information necessary for a nation to maintain its global and national security, is said to have an important role to play in tackling insecurity. This study assessed the challenges affecting intelligence gathering for efficient security operations in Nigeria. It also examined the roles of intelligence gathering in security management in Nigeria. In doing this, the opinions of 384 officers of the Nigeria Police Force in Ondo and Kaduna States were obtained through a well-structured questionnaire and the collected data were analysed with mean score analysis and the Mann-Whitney U test. Findings showed that reduction in likelihood of surprise attacks ($MS = 4.72$) emerged as the most significant role of intelligence gathering, followed closely by weakened criminal and insurgent networks ($MS = 4.71$). Furthermore, the study found that poor remuneration and welfare of security personnel ($MS = 4.71$) is the most important challenge facing intelligence gathering, followed by fear of reprisal against informants ($MS = 4.69$), and public distrust of security agencies ($MS = 4.69$). The study concluded that poor remuneration and welfare of security personnel and fear of reprisal against informants are the challenges mostly affecting effective intelligence gathering in Nigeria.

Keywords: Intelligence gathering, security management, barriers, security agencies, Nigeria

Introduction

Over the years, insecurity has become a major challenge facing Nigeria (Okon *et al.*, 2024). National security has particularly been influenced by both historical and modern forces. The country has faced numerous security issues such as civil war, military coups, religious and ethnic conflicts, terrorism and insurgency since its independence in the year 1960 (Onapajo and Uzodike, 2022). The years 1967 to 1970 were the civil war era, which broke out as a result of differences in ethnicity and regional imbalances. Then came the post-civil war era, which was marked by frequent political and democratic conflicts and instability (Adebayo, 2023). In recent years, the country has faced new security challenges such as kidnappings, banditry, armed robbery, cybercrime, and others, with groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) disrupting national security and peace (Olowonihi and Musa, 2024).

In combating these threats, intelligence gathering has become a cornerstone of modern counter-insurgency operations. Intelligence information gathering describes all the means and activities involved in procuring vital and relevant information necessary for a nation to maintain its global and national security (Martin, 2016). Security management, on the other hand, is all activities involved in the planning and coordination of resources meant to protect individuals from threats



(Abdullahi and Liman, 2024). Effective intelligence enables timely detection of threats, understanding of insurgent networks, and formulation of proactive security strategies (Adetula, 2020). However, in Nigeria, the effectiveness of intelligence gathering is often hindered by various issues and challenges.

Despite significant investments in national security, insecurity remains a persistent concern and challenge in Nigeria. Such issues as kidnappings, armed robbery, terrorism, and insurgency remain a nationwide problem. Meanwhile, reports as contained in most literature reveal that there is a compromise in intelligence management in Nigeria, which serves as a major barrier to effective security architecture (Awotayo *et al.*, 2023). While intelligence gathering is critical in combating insecurity in Nigeria, several challenges undermine its success. Therefore, this study examines the limitations to intelligence gathering in the fight against insecurity in Nigeria.

While several studies have been carried out, such as the work conducted by Okon *et al.* (2024), Abdullahi and Liman (2024), and Adegoke (2020), they indeed considered the effectiveness and impact of intelligence gathering on security management. However, limited studies exist on the challenges affecting effective intelligence gathering in the fight against insecurity in Nigeria. This paper, therefore, assesses the challenges affecting intelligence gathering for security management in Nigeria.

The Concept of Intelligence Gathering

Intelligence gathering was referred to as the collection and analysis of information that is relevant for policy formulation, especially those relating to the security of a nation (Afolabi, 2018; Lowenthal, 2020). Advanced intelligence allows the identification and comprehension of dangerous situations in a community, giving room for making a successful decision (Kekela and Jana, 2019; McCall *et al.*, 2019). The timely and accurate nature of intelligence gathering ensures the avoidance of security crises. Warner (2017) opined that intelligence thrives in secrecy, and that this character of intelligence is what makes it extremely competitive. Enyia *et al.* (2022) describe intelligence gathering as the use of methods such as infiltration, hacking, and so on to deliberately gather important information necessary to maintain the socio-economic development, welfare, and peace of a nation.

Intelligence serves as a tool used to provide efficient information about looming threats to a nation. A nation is therefore able to avert dangers to its security operations through the timely and relevant information provided by its intelligence (Adegoke, 2020). Intelligence gathering begins with acquiring information bit-by-bit from various sources, then analysing and verifying the gathered information for utilisation (Enyia *et al.*, 2022).

The Roles of Intelligence Gathering in Security Management

The increase in the rate of insecurity in Nigeria has warranted the need for credible intelligence. Intelligence gathering ensures the awareness and knowledge of dangers and threats beforehand, allowing for adequate preparation to prevent and mitigate such occurrences (Ogundele and Adebayo, 2021). For any nation to overcome and subdue the networking of terrorism within its borders, intelligence gathering is highly essential. Adegoke (2020) pointed out the relationship between the security state of a nation and the effectiveness of its intelligence. According to the author, intelligence gathering allows the timely provision of data that are reliable, effective and useful for all parties involved in tackling insecurity. Effective intelligence enables proper forecasting and appropriation of resources by the government to fight insecurity, and also ensures



that citizens' lives and properties are adequately protected. Additionally, gathering intelligence information helps identify new risks. The effect of such risks on national security diminishes when early discovery by means of intelligence enables prompt measures (Adetayo, 2024).

Several studies have examined the impact of effective intelligence gathering on the state of security of a nation. One such study is Ratcliffe (2016), who looked into whether the sharing of intelligence had any effect in the Philadelphia Police Department, and found that patrol officers who received timely and reliable intelligence information had higher crime-solving rates and more efficient use of resources. The report highlights how crucial efficient information sharing is to improving law enforcement agencies' operational effectiveness. Through the provision of timely, accurate, and suitably distributed intelligence, law enforcement agencies can make better decisions on resource deployment, enhance rates of crime resolution, and improve generally on crime prevention agendas.

In Nigeria, reliable intelligence also plays a crucial role in the fight against insecurity to attain a peaceful nation. The successful execution of intelligence-led operations mostly results in notable breakthroughs for security operatives. For instance, the Kankara 2021 rescue of schoolboys totalling 300 was a result of reliable local intelligence (Amnesty International, 2021). Also, between May 2023 and February 2025, the Nigerian Armed Forces and the Multinational Joint Task Force were able to prevent 13,543 cases of terrorism and criminal activity, with about 10,000 hostages being freed from captivity (Onje, 2025). Another notable event that highlights the importance of intelligence-led initiatives is the rescue of the 137 students kidnapped by a terrorist group in Kaduna by the Nigerian military force (Adetayo, 2024). In May 2024, the Nigerian military, leveraging information, eliminated Boko Haram chief Tahir Baga and liberated 386 detainees from terrorist encampments (Daily Trust, 2024). These achievements highlight how important it is to integrate intelligence gathering into security plans, and how reliable information may improve security in impacted regions and drastically reduce insurgent capabilities.

Challenges Affecting Security Intelligence Gathering

The critical and crucial nature of intelligence gathering in security management has been established in the literature. However, certain challenges hinder effective gathering and utilisation of credible intelligence. Awotayo *et al.* (2023) identified such challenges as competition and lack of cooperation among security agencies, limited finance and resources, poor coordination, corruption and political influence, inadequate skilled and experienced personnel, technological constraints, incompetence of security agencies, and public perception and trust. Lanshima and Lanshima (2024) examined factors inhibiting the gathering of intelligence in Nigeria and found such factors to include lack of training and re-training of security agents in modern intelligence techniques, infiltration of security agencies, lack of security knowledge and knowledge of security, primitive mode of intelligence gathering, distrust of security agencies and agents by citizens, poor remuneration and welfare of security personnel, and lack information-sharing among security agencies.

In the 21st century, intelligence acquisition is most effectively conducted using contemporary intelligence systems and technology. Regrettably, in Nigeria, security agencies occasionally employ crude investigative techniques to extract information from suspects; however, these methods are neither efficient nor effective in procuring reliable information (Ugwuoke, 2015). Moreover, Nigeria lags in the training and re-training of security personnel in the application of modern intelligence techniques and systems for security management. Moreover, there is a lack of these modern-day systems, equipment, and technology that enhance intelligence gathering (Lanshima, 2023). In Nigeria, terrorists and criminals may find their way into security agencies, making it hard



to handle intelligence and security. Certain individuals in the security agencies collude with terrorists and make intelligence ineffective (Adepegba *et al.*, 2022).

Effective and successful intelligence and security management demands both security expertise and an understanding of security principles. Unfortunately, individuals possessing expertise in security, including graduates of Criminology and Security Studies or Intelligence and Security Studies, are often denied employment within Nigeria's security agencies unless they have connections with individuals in executive positions within those agencies (Lanshima, 2023). Also, the lack of trust in security agencies and their personnel generally impedes intelligence gathering as people are uncooperative towards security personnel gathering information (Lanshima, 2018; Ugwuoke, 2015). Aside from this, security agencies also often fail to share information among themselves. This has resulted in poor coordination and interaction, impeding the sharing of intelligence between various agencies within the state, and ultimately giving room for insecurity growth (Falaju, 2018; Inuwa, 2021).

Ugwuoke (2015) opined that the detection of crime is hindered by inadequate funding, poor remuneration, and welfare of security agencies and personnel. Ibekwe (2025), on the other hand, found that challenges such as technology and infrastructure inadequacy, lack of coordination and inter-agency rivalry, corruption and political interference, human resource limitations, socio-cultural barriers, and deficiency in legal and policy framework face intelligence gathering in Nigeria. Other challenges identified by the author include lack of trust between the community and security agencies, fear of reprisal, lack of incentives for informants, inadequate training and resources for security personnel.

Adegoke (2020) opined that the lack of confidence in government, poor professionalism of security agencies, corruption and ethnic and religious barriers are factors mitigating against adequate information gathering for security activities. Olowonihi and Musa (2024), in their study on the contribution of intelligence gathering to Nigeria's national security, also identified several challenges to intelligence gathering. These challenges include inter-agency rivalry, communication barriers, jurisdiction issues, disparity in organisational culture, infrastructural constraints, and adaptation to technological advancements.

Methodology

This study focused on Nigeria, with particular emphasis on Ondo State and Kaduna State. Kaduna State was selected due to its prolonged exposure to insurgency and extensive deployment of intelligence-led counter-terrorism operations, while Ondo State represents a South-Western state experiencing rising insecurity issues. Moreover, Ondo borders other high-risk states like Kogi, Edo, and Ekiti, known for banditry, kidnapping, and rising insecurity. This makes Ondo State a strategic operational zone for criminal groups, hence increasing its demand for effective intelligence gathering. This study adopted a comparative cross-sectional survey research design. This approach allowed the collection of data at a particular point in time without manipulation (Thomas, 2022). The population for the study comprised officers of the Nigeria Police Force in Ondo and Kaduna States. A combination of stratified and purposive sampling techniques was employed. To ensure adequate representation for comparative analysis, the respondents were first categorised based on their location. Thereafter, purposive sampling was used to select police officers directly involved in intelligence gathering.



The sample size for the study was determined using Cochran and Banner's (1977) formula for large populations at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, resulting in a minimum sample size of 384 respondents. This approach was adopted because the exact population of police officers in the selected states was not readily available.

Cochran's Formula:

Given the comparative nature of the study, the sample was proportionately allocated between Ondo State and Kaduna State, resulting in approximately 192 respondents from each state to ensure a balanced representation. Out of the 384 questionnaires, a total of 232, which represented 60% of the total administered questionnaires, were retrieved and found usable for analysis. Variables were compiled from literature, and data were obtained by administering questionnaires to the respondents. The questionnaire was designed to obtain data on the barriers to intelligence gathering using a 5-point Likert scale of 1 – Not at all important, 2 – Slightly important, 3 – Important, 4 – Fairly important, 5 – Very important. The data was analysed using mean score analysis and the Mann-Whitney U Test. Mean score analysis was used to get the average response of the respondents on the roles of intelligence in curbing insecurity and barriers to intelligence gathering, while the Mann-Whitney U Test was used to check if there were significant differences in the views of the respondents across Ondo and Kaduna States.

Results and Discussion

Background Information of the Respondents

The demographic information of the respondents was collected to check their suitability as data givers. The result revealed that 44% of the respondents were working in Kaduna State, while the other 56% were posted in Ondo State. The result further showed that the majority of the respondents (45.7%) were senior officers, while 86 (37.1%) and 40 (17.2%) were junior officers and supervisors, respectively. The results on gender revealed that 172 (74.1%) of the respondents were male, while 60 (25.9%) were female. This reflects that the profession is male-dominated, with fewer females.

The age distribution showed that 31.9% of the respondents were between 30–39 years, while 31% were below 30 years. Also, 30.2% were between 40–49 years, while only 6.9% were 50 years and above. The result further showed the average age of the respondents as 36 years. This indicates that, on average, the respondents fall within the middle-age range, suggesting a relatively mature workforce with enough professional experience. Regarding years of service in the force, 29.3% of the respondents had spent 11–15 years, while 25%, 19.8%, 19.8%, and 6% had been in service for 6-10 years, less than 5 years, 16–20 years, and more than 20 years, respectively. The average years of service of the respondents within the Police force was 11.2 years, reflecting long-term associations and stability within the workforce.

Finally, on the area in which the respondents were assigned, the result showed that the majority (31.9%) of the respondents were from the intelligence unit, while others were from patrol/general duties (27.6%), investigation unit (25%), and operations (15.5%). This indicates that the majority of the respondents had prior experience in intelligence. The demographic data reflects a sample that is well-distributed, with a strong representation of highly qualified, professionally recognised, and experienced practitioners, providing credibility to the study.



The Roles of Intelligence Gathering in Security Management in Nigeria

The result presented in Table 1 shows the roles of intelligence in tackling insecurity in Nigeria. The reduction in the likelihood of surprise attacks emerged as the highest-ranked role, followed closely by weakened criminal and insurgent networks, providing actionable insights rather than raw data, and resulting in arrests or disruption of criminal networks. Moreover, all the identified variables have mean scores above 4.50, implying that they are all seen as important roles in security operations. The finding suggests that integrating intelligence in security operations in Nigeria can help tackle the challenge of insecurity and bring about a reduction in criminal attacks. This corroborates previous literature such as Awotayo *et al.* (2023) and Uduo (2025), who highlight a correlation between successful intelligence and the state of security of a nation. Furthermore, Treverton (2021) established that the prompt distribution of intelligence to legislators shapes counterterrorism plans and resource allocation, while Fingar (2021) claimed that delivering actionable intelligence to security personnel facilitates the effective response and disruption of terrorist activities.

Further analysis was conducted using Mann-Whitney U to assess if there are statistically significant differences in the views of the respondents on the roles of intelligence gathering across the two states. The result reveals that for the majority of the roles, there is no statistically significant difference in the respondents' ratings across the two states, as their p-values are higher than 0.05. However, two (2) roles show statistically significant differences. These are intelligence gathering enables early detection of security threats ($Z = -3.738$, $p = 0.000$) and intelligence-led operations often result in arrests or disruption of criminal networks ($Z = -2.114$, $p = 0.034$). This implies that respondents in Ondo and Kaduna States differ significantly in how they perceive these two roles of intelligence gathering. In other words, their experiences with these two roles of intelligence differs.

Challenges Affecting Intelligence Gathering for Security Management in Nigeria

The results in Table 2 reveal the top challenges affecting intelligence gathering, including poor remuneration and welfare of security personnel, fear of reprisal against informants, public distrust of security agencies, lack of incentives and protection for informants, and jurisdictional conflicts among security agencies. Nevertheless, all the identified challenges were found to be highly important as revealed by their mean scores ($MS \geq 4.49$). This finding suggests that in ensuring effective and successful intelligence operations, personnel motivation, public confidence, and informant enthusiasm and security are essential ingredients. If these are not appropriately put in place, the quality and quantity of intelligence received can be watered down.

This finding aligns well with the study of Lanshima and Lanshima (2024), who identified distrust of security agencies and agents by citizens, poor remuneration and welfare of security personnel, and lack of information-sharing among security agencies, as challenges to intelligence operations. Similarly, Lanshima (2018) opined that the lack of trust in security agencies and their personnel generally impedes intelligence gathering, as the people are uncooperative towards security personnel gathering information. Awotayo *et al.* (2023) opined that barriers such as competition and lack of cooperation among security agencies, limited finance and resources, poor coordination, and public perception and trust affect effective intelligence gathering.

The Mann-Whitney U Test reveals that there are no significant differences in the respondents' perceptions of eleven (11) of the identified challenges across the two states, as their p-values are higher than the 0.05 level of significance. This suggests a general view among respondents in the



two states regarding most of the challenges affecting intelligence gathering and sharing. However, five variables show statistically significant differences. They include inter-agency rivalry and competition ($Z = 2.488$, $p = 0.013$), inadequate funding of intelligence operations ($Z = 3.499$, $p = 0.000$), bureaucratic delays and administrative inefficiencies ($Z = 2.146$, $p = 0.032$), inadequate intelligence technology and equipment ($Z = 2.424$, $p = 0.015$), and fear of reprisal against informants ($Z = 1.971$, $p = 0.049$). This implies that respondents in Ondo and Kaduna states differ significantly in how they perceive these specific challenges to intelligence gathering. Moreover, the mean scores also show that respondents in Ondo State generally rated these challenges slightly higher than those in Kaduna State, which suggests that those in Ondo State perceived these challenges more severely.

Conclusion

The landscape of security in Nigeria is complex with many dimensions, and several challenges such as banditry, terrorism, and the like persist. It is essential that these issues are properly and adequately addressed, and this may sometimes require an intricate approach which relies mainly on gathering and utilising reliable intelligence. This study examined the challenges affecting intelligence gathering for efficient security management in Nigeria. The study concludes that poor remuneration and welfare of security personnel, fear of reprisal against informants, public distrust of security agencies, lack of incentives and protection for informants, and jurisdictional conflicts among security agencies are the major challenges against effective intelligence gathering in Nigeria.

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