



IMPACT OF THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS WITH EMPHASIS ON IRAQ ON NIGERIA'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION, HEALTH, SECURITY, AND SOCIAL WELFARE

By

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Abstract

This study examines the socio-economic implications of the Middle East crisis, with particular emphasis on Iraq, on Nigeria's development. Although geographically distant, conflicts in the Middle East significantly influence Nigeria through global oil market fluctuations, geopolitical instability, and economic interdependence. The study adopts a qualitative analytical approach, drawing on secondary data from reputable local and international sources. It finds that volatility in oil prices, often triggered by crises in Iraq and the broader Middle East, has mixed consequences for Nigeria's economy, contributing to inflation, fiscal instability, and reduced real investment in key social sectors. The education sector is affected through declining household income and inconsistent government funding, while the health sector faces rising operational costs and reduced accessibility. Security challenges are exacerbated by economic stress and the indirect spread of global instability, and social welfare conditions deteriorate due to increased cost of living and poverty levels. The study concludes that Nigeria's vulnerability to external shocks underscores the need for economic diversification and stronger social protection systems. Policy recommendations are provided to mitigate these impacts and enhance national resilience.

Keywords: Education, Health, Security, Social Welfare, Middle East Crisis

1.0 Introduction

Globalization has deepened the interconnectedness of national economies, making countries increasingly vulnerable to external geopolitical developments. One region that has consistently



influenced global economic and political dynamics is the Middle East, particularly Iraq, due to its strategic importance in global oil production and international security. Over the years, crises in Iraq ranging from armed conflicts to political instability have had far-reaching consequences beyond the region, affecting both developed and developing economies. Nigeria, as a major oil-exporting country, is especially sensitive to such developments. The Nigerian economy is heavily dependent on crude oil exports, which account for a substantial share of government revenue and foreign exchange earnings. Consequently, any disruption in global oil supply or price volatility often linked to Middle East crises has direct and indirect effects on Nigeria's macroeconomic stability. While increases in oil prices may temporarily boost government revenue, they are frequently accompanied by inflationary pressures, currency depreciation, and increased cost of living. These dynamics create significant challenges for socio-economic development.

Beyond macroeconomic indicators, the effects of the Middle East crisis extend to critical sectors such as education, health, security, and social welfare. Fluctuations in government revenue and rising inflation reduce public spending capacity and household purchasing power, thereby limiting access to essential services. In addition, global insecurity and the proliferation of arms and extremist ideologies contribute to domestic security concerns. These multidimensional impacts highlight the need to critically examine how distant geopolitical crises shape national development outcomes in Nigeria. This study therefore explores the impact of the Middle East crisis, with a focus on Iraq, on Nigeria's socio-economic development, paying particular attention to its implications for education, health, security, and social welfare. By doing so, it provides insights into the structural vulnerabilities of the Nigerian economy and offers policy-relevant recommendations for mitigating external shocks.

2.0 Conceptual Terms

Concept of Education

Education is a multidimensional concept that involves the transmission of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for individual and societal development. Classical scholars define education as a continuous process through which individuals acquire competencies and behaviours that are useful to society. For instance, (University of the people 2024) defined education as the studying in order to obtain a deeper knowledge and understanding of a variety of subjects to be applied to daily life. Education is not limited to just knowledge from books, but can also be obtained through practical experiences outside of the classroom. Education is the process where an individual acquires or imparts basic knowledge to another. It is also where a person develops skills essential to daily living, learns social norms, develops judgment and reasoning, and learns how to discern right from wrong. The ultimate goal of education is to help an individual navigate life and contribute to society once they become older (Worldvision,2023). Education is a process that transfer knowledge, skills, and character traits that comes or manifests in various forms to empower the individual to be social and economic useful to himself or herself and the society.



Education is an organized and planned process that leads to acquisition of knowledge from an institute of learning for personal and national development (20).

The Nigerian educational system is broad and structured into multiple levels, reflecting its national policy framework and developmental goals. It comprises early childhood (pre-primary), primary, secondary, and tertiary education, each designed to achieve specific learning outcomes. The system operates under the supervision of the Federal Ministry of Education, while implementation is decentralized to state and local governments. The scope of the system includes curriculum development, teacher education, educational administration, technical and vocational training, and higher education research. Despite its wide scope, the system faces challenges such as underfunding, regional disparities, and infrastructural deficits, which affect its effectiveness in delivering quality education. Additionally, issues such as access, equity, and quality remain central concerns, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

Concept of Health and Scope of Nigeria Health System

Health refers to a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease. Within the Nigerian context, health is closely linked to the capacity of individuals to function productively and contribute to national development. The Nigerian health system is structured across three tiers primary, secondary, and tertiary levels corresponding to local, state, and federal government responsibilities (16). Its scope includes preventive, promotive, curative, and rehabilitative services, as well as public health interventions such as immunization, maternal care, and disease control. The system is guided by policies such as the National Health Act, which aims to improve access to basic healthcare services through mechanisms like the Basic Health Care Provision Fund. However, the sector is constrained by inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and shortages of healthcare personnel, limiting its ability to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population (17).

Concept of Economy and Nigeria's Economic System

The economy refers to the system through which a country organizes the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. Nigeria operates a mixed economic system that combines elements of both market and state control, with significant reliance on the oil sector as a primary source of revenue. As Africa's largest economy, Nigeria has a diverse economic base that includes agriculture, services, and information and communication technology, although oil remains dominant. The scope of Nigeria's economy covers sectors such as manufacturing, trade, banking, and telecommunications, all of which contribute to gross domestic product (GDP). However, the economy is characterized by structural challenges, including inflation, unemployment, and overdependence on oil revenue, which make it vulnerable to external shocks and limit inclusive growth (9).



Nigeria Citizens and Their Economic Status

The economic status of Nigerian citizens reflects significant inequality and widespread poverty despite the country's economic potential. A large proportion of the population lives below the poverty line, with about 63% experiencing multidimensional poverty, including lack of access to income, education, and basic services. High unemployment and underemployment rates further constrain the economic well-being of citizens, particularly among the youth population. While a small segment of the population benefits from economic opportunities in sectors such as oil and telecommunications, the majority struggle with rising living costs and limited access to social services. These conditions have implications for human capital development, as low income levels restrict access to quality education and healthcare, thereby perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality (10).

3.0 Method

The impact of the Middle East Crisis with Emphasis on Iraq on Nigeria's Socio-Economic Development: Implications for Education, Health, Security, and Social Welfare. This paper is a position paper that adopted a systematic literature review-based method. The method allows to collect and review the related previous literature from various online sources. With the aid of digital platform, the researcher collected secondary information to generate knowledge on this topic from 2015-2025. The position paper followed qualitative narrative design method. The researcher has visited different online sites to collect the previous literature and analyze the impact of the Middle East Crisis with Emphasis on Iraq on Nigeria's Socio-Economic Development: Implications for Education, Health, Security, and Social Welfare. The previous findings are critically analyzed and presented in different themes as on the impact of the Middle East Crisis with Emphasis on Iraq on Nigeria's Socio-Economic Development: Implications for Education, Health, Security, and Social Welfare (Adapted from Ogunode, 2025).

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion

This output of the literatures on the impact of the Middle East Crisis with Emphasis on Iraq on Nigeria's Socio-Economic Development: Implications for Education, Health, Security, and Social Welfare presents an in-depth study and result that can infer conclusion on the topic. The study includes: online publication; conference paper, journals sorted from reputable international journals such as CEON, Elsevier, Hindawi, JSTOR, IEEE, Learn Techlib, SAGE, Nebraska and Springer (Adapted from Ogunode, 2025v).

Exclusion

Also, the literature review excludes information from edited books, preprints, monographs, information below 2015 and book chapters (Adapted from Ogunode, 2025).



4.0 Result and Discussion on impact of the Middle East Crisis with Emphasis on Iraq on Nigeria's Socio-Economic Development: Implications for Education, Health, Security, and Social Welfare

Education

The Middle East crisis, particularly conflicts involving Iraq, has significant socio-economic implications for Nigeria due to the country's structural dependence on global oil markets and external geopolitical stability. One of the most visible impacts is on the education sector, largely transmitted through macroeconomic instability. Rising global oil prices linked to Middle East conflicts often generate mixed fiscal outcomes for Nigeria while government revenue may increase, inflation and exchange rate pressures reduce real spending capacity on education (4). Increased fuel and transportation costs raise the operational expenses of schools, limit access to educational materials, and constrain funding for research and infrastructure. Moreover, economic volatility reduces household income, forcing many families to withdraw children from school or delay tertiary education. Evidence from conflict-related economic studies shows that fluctuations in oil prices and revenue instability negatively affect government expenditure on human capital development, including education (5).

Health sector

In the health sector, the spillover effects of Middle East crises are primarily driven by inflation and reduced public welfare spending. As fuel prices surge due to disruptions in global supply chains, healthcare delivery becomes more expensive affecting transportation of medical supplies, hospital operations, and access to services. Recent analyses indicate that rising energy costs in Nigeria, partly linked to Middle East instability, have increased the cost of essential goods, including pharmaceuticals and medical logistics (6). This situation disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, widening inequality in access to healthcare. Furthermore, government resources are often reallocated to manage economic shocks, leaving health budgets underfunded. Empirical studies on conflict economies also show that reduced investment in human capital especially health directly undermines productivity and long-term national development (7).

Security dimension

The security dimension of the Middle East crisis, including developments in Iraq, also indirectly influences Nigeria's internal stability. Global oil price shocks triggered by such conflicts can intensify domestic tensions, particularly in oil-producing regions like the Niger Delta. Research shows that increases in oil prices are associated with heightened conflict intensity and government-rebel confrontations in Nigeria, as competition over oil wealth intensifies (8;13). Additionally, the global proliferation of arms and extremist ideologies from conflict zones in the Middle East has historically contributed to insecurity in parts of Africa, including Nigeria. The diversion of government expenditure toward security operations reduces funds available for



education and social services, thereby reinforcing a cycle of underdevelopment. Local media reports also highlight that Middle East tensions raise national security concerns through economic stress, inflation, and social unrest (6;14).

Social welfare of Nigerian citizens

The social welfare of Nigerian citizens is significantly affected through rising living costs and declining purchasing power. Middle East conflicts disrupt global oil supply chains, leading to sharp increases in fuel prices, transportation costs, and food prices in Nigeria (7;12). This inflationary pressure erodes real incomes and increases poverty levels, particularly among low-income households. As living costs rise, government social welfare programmes become strained, and households reduce spending on education, healthcare, and nutrition. Studies have shown that conflict-induced economic instability reduces welfare outcomes by increasing unemployment, lowering investment, and diverting resources away from social development (4; 11). Thus, although geographically distant, crises in Iraq and the wider Middle East exert profound indirect effects on Nigeria's socio-economic structure, especially in critical sectors that determine human development.

4.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

The analysis demonstrates that the Middle East crisis, particularly developments in Iraq, exerts significant indirect influence on Nigeria's socio-economic landscape. Despite the geographical distance, the interconnected nature of the global economy ensures that disruptions in one region have ripple effects across others. In Nigeria's case, dependence on oil revenue makes the country highly susceptible to external shocks arising from geopolitical tensions in oil-producing regions.

The findings reveal that while oil price increases may generate short-term fiscal gains, the broader consequences such as inflation, economic instability, and reduced real income—undermine sustainable development. Key sectors, including education and health, suffer from inconsistent funding and rising operational costs, limiting access and quality of services. Security challenges are further intensified by economic hardship and global instability, while social welfare conditions deteriorate as citizens grapple with increasing living expenses and declining purchasing power. The study underscores the urgent need for Nigeria to reduce its vulnerability to external shocks by strengthening domestic economic structures and investing in human capital development. Based on the findings, the study recommend the following:

- 1) To mitigate the adverse effects of Middle East crises on Nigeria's socio-economic development, several strategic measures are necessary. First, the government should prioritize economic diversification by investing in non-oil sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and technology. This will reduce overdependence on crude oil and enhance economic stability in the face of global shocks.



- 2) There is a need to strengthen public investment in education and health by ensuring consistent and protected budgetary allocations. Establishing special intervention funds for these sectors can help cushion the impact of economic volatility and maintain service delivery standards.
- 3) Nigeria should enhance its social protection programmes to support vulnerable populations during periods of economic hardship. Expanding initiatives such as conditional cash transfers, subsidized healthcare, and educational support schemes will improve citizens' resilience to rising living costs.
- 4) The government must improve its security architecture by addressing both internal and external threats. This includes strengthening intelligence systems, promoting regional cooperation, and addressing the socio-economic roots of insecurity such as unemployment and poverty.
- 5) Effective macroeconomic management is essential. Policies aimed at stabilizing inflation, managing exchange rates, and building fiscal buffers—such as sovereign wealth funds—will help Nigeria better withstand the economic shocks associated with global crises. Through these measures, the country can enhance its resilience and ensure sustainable socio-economic development despite external uncertainties.

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