
**INTELLIGENCE GATHERING AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: A
CASE STUDY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE SERVICES, KADUNA STATE
(2015-2022)**

AREN PALANG PETER
Department of Political Science
Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna

ISAAC OZOEMENAM MBACHU, PhD mni
Department of Defence and Security Studies
Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna

Abstract

This study investigates the role of intelligence gathering in promoting national security in Nigeria, focusing on the Department of State Services (DSS) in Kaduna State (2015–2022). It recognises intelligence as the foundation of effective security architecture, particularly in contexts of complex threats. Guided by Gabriel Almond’s Structural Functionalist theory, the study examines how the DSS contributes to threat detection, conflict prevention, and stability. It analyses intelligence tools, institutional and technological constraints, and strategic options for enhancing efficiency. A mixed-method design was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. Using Taro Yamane’s formula, 270 questionnaires were administered to DSS personnel, complemented by 15 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with stakeholders from the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), and the Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs (MISHAKS). Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, mean ranking, and thematic analysis. Findings show that the DSS is central to mitigating internal threats but faces challenges such as outdated surveillance tools, weak inter-agency collaboration, limited training, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. Despite this, the DSS leverages coping strategies including human intelligence (HUMINT), community engagement, and institutional reforms to strengthen early warning and information flow. The study concludes that a reformed, well-resourced, and technologically equipped DSS can significantly enhance domestic intelligence and national security. It recommends targeted investment in surveillance infrastructure, stronger inter-agency synergy, and decentralised intelligence functions to build resilience against security threats.

Keywords: Intelligence Gathering, National Security, Inter-Agency Collaboration, Kaduna State, Human Intelligence

Introduction

Intelligence gathering is a cornerstone of national security, underpinning sovereignty, stability, and public safety in both peace and conflict. Its importance is evident throughout modern history, where effective use of intelligence has shaped warfare and diplomacy. During the First World War, for example, British interception of enemy communications significantly influenced Allied victories (Kahn, 2006). Today, intelligence encompasses surveillance, data analytics, cyber operations, and human intelligence, enabling states to predict, prevent, and mitigate threats.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, exposed critical weaknesses in U.S. intelligence despite the availability of relevant data. In response, the U.S. overhauled its intelligence infrastructure, prioritising pre-emptive threat detection and inter-agency coordination (Scott & Jackson, 2004). More recently, U.S. intelligence accurately predicted Russia's invasion of Ukraine, allowing NATO countries to prepare diplomatically and militarily, though this did not guarantee battlefield success (Pavel, 2022). These cases highlight that the value of intelligence lies not merely in collection but in strategic utilisation.

In Africa, intelligence gathering remains weak and underutilised. The continent faces recurring threats—terrorism, separatism, civil wars, and ethnic violence—driven by post-colonial grievances, porous borders, political exclusion, and unemployment (Esterhuysen, 2021). While African states have intelligence agencies, their operations are often undermined by poor funding, political interference, and inadequate training. Ghana's coups against Kwame Nkrumah and K.A. Busia, despite early warnings, illustrate how intelligence is often ignored due to political and ethnic biases (Quantson, 2005). Even in South Africa, with a relatively advanced structure, domestic insecurity from organised crime and socio-economic unrest continues to dominate the agenda (Esterhuysen, 2021).

Nigeria exemplifies these challenges. Despite establishing the Department of State Services (DSS), National Intelligence Agency (NIA), and Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) in 1986 to mirror global best practices, the country continues to struggle with terrorism, banditry, farmer–herder clashes, separatist agitations, and cybercrime. These agencies face persistent problems of political manipulation, weak inter-agency coordination, limited logistics, and poor community engagement (Nte, 2013; Lowenthal, 2006). The DSS, responsible for domestic intelligence and reporting to the President through the National Security Adviser, has pursued reforms such as technological upgrades, personnel training, and strategic partnerships. Yet, its performance remains contested,

particularly in Kaduna State, a strategic hub in the North-West plagued by banditry, ethno-religious violence, and mass kidnappings. The perceived inability of the DSS Kaduna Command to generate and deploy timely intelligence has heightened public disillusionment and raised concerns over institutional responsiveness.

This study, therefore, examines the dynamics of intelligence gathering in Kaduna State, evaluating DSS mechanisms, operational challenges, and their implications for Nigeria's broader security objectives. By doing so, it contributes to the discourse on intelligence reform and national security in Africa's most volatile yet strategically vital state.

Statement of the Problem

The worsening insecurity in Nigeria has become a national crisis, with intelligence mechanisms struggling to address evolving threats. Between 2015 and 2022, Nigeria witnessed a sharp escalation in terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, ethno-religious violence, separatist agitations, and armed robbery. Despite the presence of agencies such as the Department of State Services (DSS), responses have remained largely reactive, exposing systemic gaps in intelligence collection, analysis, and utilisation. In 2015, Nigeria ranked third globally among terrorism-impacted countries, with Boko Haram responsible for over 6,600 deaths the previous year (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2016). Although Boko Haram's strength later waned, other threats surged. The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) reported more than 10,000 deaths from organised violence in 2021, with Kaduna among the most affected states (ACLED, 2022). Mandated to generate domestic intelligence, the DSS has often faced criticism for delayed or inadequate responses.

Kaduna's security crisis was particularly severe, with over 1,192 deaths and 3,348 kidnappings recorded in 2021 alone (Kaduna State Ministry of Internal Security, 2021). Local governments such as Birnin Gwari, Giwa, Chikun, and Kajuru became epicentres of violence, despite the DSS command's mandate to provide timely intelligence. This mismatch between institutional responsibility and security outcomes suggests critical gaps in capacity and coordination. Key constraints include politicisation, poor inter-agency collaboration, weak community-based intelligence, and limited technological tools. Bureaucratic inertia and reactive operations have further undermined effectiveness. Notably, in the 2021 Greenfield University abduction, security agencies, including the DSS, reportedly failed to act swiftly despite early warnings. Such lapses

underscore the need to interrogate how intelligence is gathered, analysed, and operationalised at state level.

This study therefore examines the effectiveness of intelligence gathering by the DSS in Kaduna State between 2015 and 2022. It seeks to identify systemic and operational lapses, explore institutional constraints, and propose strategies for strengthening intelligence-led responses to Nigeria's security challenges.

Research Questions

The study seeks to address the following research questions:

- a) What is the role of intelligence gathering in promoting national security in Nigeria?
- b) What methods and tools were employed by the Department of State Services (DSS) in Kaduna State for intelligence gathering between 2015 and 2022?
- c) What are the key institutional, operational, and technological challenges facing the DSS in intelligence gathering and threat prevention in Kaduna State?
- d) What strategies can be adopted to enhance the effectiveness of intelligence gathering by the DSS for improved national security outcomes?

Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to examine the role of intelligence gathering in promoting national security in Nigeria, using the Department of State Services (DSS) in Kaduna State as a case study within the 2015–2022 period. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- a) Assess the role of intelligence gathering in promoting national security in Nigeria.
- b) Examine the methods and tools employed by the Department of State Services (DSS) in Kaduna State for intelligence gathering between 2015 and 2022.
- c) Identify the key institutional, operational, and technological challenges confronting the DSS in the process of intelligence gathering and threat prevention in Kaduna State.
- d) Propose strategic measures for enhancing the effectiveness of intelligence gathering by the DSS to improve national security outcomes.

Literature Review

The Role of Intelligence Gathering in National Security

Intelligence gathering is widely regarded as the “first line of defense” in anticipating and responding to threats against state sovereignty and stability (Lowenthal, 2006). By enabling the timely acquisition and analysis of information, it provides early warning on risks such as terrorism, insurgency, cyber-attacks, organized crime, and espionage. Warner (2012) underscores that the core value of intelligence lies in its capacity to forewarn decision-makers, allowing states to prepare, deter, or neutralize threats. In Nigeria, where Boko Haram, banditry, and ethno-religious conflicts remain pervasive, timely intelligence often determines whether crises are contained or escalate.

A central role of intelligence is to support policy and strategic decision-making. It informs the allocation of resources, deployment of forces, and diplomatic initiatives without dictating policy outcomes (Pillar, 2011). Nigeria’s counterterrorism strategy against Boko Haram and ISWAP, for instance, relies heavily on intelligence from the DSS and DIA. Intelligence is also crucial for counterintelligence—uncovering espionage, sabotage, and extremist activity that could undermine state authority (Adebayo, 2019). Equally important is its function in inter-agency collaboration. In advanced systems like the U.S. and U.K., intelligence sharing occurs through centralized structures such as National Security Councils. Nigeria, however, suffers from poor inter-agency coordination, weakening responses to violent crime and terrorism (Onuoha, 2014). At the community level, intelligence supports crime prevention, helping address kidnapping, robbery, and political violence. Yet, the DSS’s over-centralization often limits its responsiveness to local threats in states like Kaduna (Ibrahim & Shehu, 2022).

Beyond domestic security, intelligence enhances foreign policy by clarifying the intentions of other states, thereby aiding negotiation, alliance-building, and crisis management (Gill & Phythian, 2006). For Nigeria, strategic intelligence from the NIA has been vital in ECOWAS and AU peacekeeping and counterterrorism operations. Finally, intelligence strengthens resilience by fostering public confidence in the state’s ability to prevent threats. Conversely, failures—such as those preceding the Chibok and Kankara school abductions—undermine trust and expose gaps in preparedness (Okereke, 2020). In sum, intelligence underpins proactive governance, conflict

prevention, and national resilience. For Nigeria, particularly in volatile states like Kaduna, enhancing intelligence capacity remains critical for sustainable peace and development.

The Nigerian Experience in Intelligence Gathering

Nigeria's intelligence system has evolved alongside its political and security landscape since independence in 1960. Initially rooted in the colonial-era Special Branch of the Nigeria Police, formal reforms in 1986 under Decree No. 19 created three core agencies: the Department of State Services (DSS) for domestic intelligence, the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) for foreign intelligence, and the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) for military intelligence (Adebayo, 2019; Onuoha, 2014). This structure sought to delineate roles and strengthen national security management. The DSS has become the most prominent in internal security, mandated to counter terrorism, espionage, subversion, and threats to the constitutional order (Nte, 2013). Despite its formal powers, the agency has been criticised for opaque operations, political bias, and limited accountability. The changing nature of Nigeria's security threats—including Boko Haram insurgency, mass kidnappings, separatist agitations, piracy, and cybercrime—has highlighted the inadequacy of intelligence responses. The 2014 Chibok abductions, for instance, revealed serious failures in intelligence sharing and preparedness (Onuoha, 2014).

Key challenges undermine effectiveness. Inter-agency rivalry fosters duplication, mistrust, and withholding of critical information, with no centralised fusion centre for coordinated analysis (Aghedo & Osumah, 2012). Technical intelligence remains underdeveloped, as agencies rely heavily on human informants while lacking modern tools such as drones, biometric databases, and geospatial systems (Okereke, 2020). Chronic underfunding, outdated infrastructure, and politicisation further erode credibility, with successive governments accused of deploying agencies for partisan purposes rather than national protection (Adebayo, 2019). This politicisation undermines public trust and weakens community participation, which is vital for grassroots intelligence. Nonetheless, progress has been made. The DSS has improved personnel training, expanded its state-level presence, and enhanced collaboration with international partners such as the U.S., U.K., and INTERPOL. Intelligence-led operations have disrupted terrorist cells, prevented plots, and reduced certain high-profile crimes in Abuja and Lagos (Ibrahim & Shehu, 2022).

In Kaduna State, however, the challenges remain acute. The state has faced recurring sectarian violence, mass abductions, and banditry, with the DSS often unable to prevent high-profile incidents such as the 2021 Greenfield University student kidnappings. These lapses reflect the broader national paradox: while Nigeria has the institutional framework for effective intelligence, deficiencies in coordination, technology, professionalism, and community engagement continue to limit impact. Addressing these shortcomings requires reforms that emphasise inter-agency synergy, technological modernisation, and inclusive, community-based intelligence approaches.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Gabriel Almond's Structural Functionalist Theory as its theoretical framework. Structural functionalism, a paradigm originally rooted in sociology and political science, offers a systematic approach for analysing the roles and interrelations of institutions within a political system. Almond and Powell (1966) developed the theory to explain how political systems perform necessary functions that sustain societal stability, especially in complex and evolving environments. The theory argues that every political system—regardless of its level of development—must perform certain basic functions: political socialisation and recruitment, interest articulation and aggregation, rule-making, rule-application, and rule-adjudication. These functions are executed by various structures (i.e., institutions) that are specialised for particular roles but interdependent in ensuring the survival and effectiveness of the political system.

Applied to the realm of national security, Almond's theory views security institutions, such as the Department of State Services (DSS), as critical functional structures responsible for maintaining law, order, and the integrity of the state. Intelligence gathering, in this context, is a core function within the subsystem of security governance that enables the political system to identify threats, mobilise resources, and respond effectively to both internal and external challenges. The effectiveness of the DSS in intelligence gathering can therefore be evaluated by assessing how well it fulfills its designated functions within the broader political and security framework. This involves examining how the DSS communicates with other structures (e.g., the police, military, and judiciary), how it adapts to changes in the security landscape, and how it contributes to the system's stability or dysfunction.

In Nigeria, where state institutions often suffer from structural weaknesses and operational inefficiencies, the structural-functionalist approach is particularly useful in diagnosing systemic issues. For instance, the challenges of poor inter-agency coordination, technological deficits, and politicization of intelligence can be seen as symptoms of a malfunction within the security structure—one that affects the overall performance of the political system. As Almond (1960) emphasizes, dysfunctions in one structure inevitably lead to stress or failure in the system as a whole. This analytical lens is essential in understanding why, despite the presence of a formal intelligence apparatus, Nigeria continues to experience recurrent national security crises.

The relevance of Gabriel Almond's Structural Functionalist Theory to this study lies in its explanatory power for understanding how political institutions, particularly security agencies like the Department of State Services (DSS), perform critical roles to maintain system stability and safeguard national interests. The theory posits that every political system must have certain functional structures capable of performing key roles—such as security provision, information processing, and enforcement of laws—to ensure the survival and coherence of the state (Almond & Powell, 1966). In the context of this study, intelligence gathering is conceptualised as one of the essential functions performed by the DSS, a specialised structure within Nigeria's political system, to detect, prevent, and respond to threats against national security.

Applying the theory enables the research to assess how effectively the DSS has carried out its functional responsibilities in Kaduna State between 2015 and 2022, a period marked by heightened insecurity. It provides a framework for evaluating the internal operations of the DSS, the tools it employs, the inter-agency collaboration it engages in, and its responsiveness to environmental stimuli such as terrorism, banditry, and political unrest. By examining how the DSS interacts with other security agencies (e.g., police, military, and local vigilantes), the theory helps in identifying whether these structures are functionally complementary or whether systemic inefficiencies exist that undermine national security outcomes.

Moreover, the structural-functionalist perspective draws attention to institutional stability and adaptability. According to Almond (1960), institutions must not only perform their assigned roles but must also adapt to societal changes and challenges. This is especially relevant in the Nigerian security context, where evolving threats—such as cybercrime, asymmetric warfare, and violent

extremism, demand dynamic intelligence approaches. The theory provides a lens through which the study can analyze whether the DSS has demonstrated functional innovation and institutional resilience in the face of these emerging security threats. Furthermore, the theory's emphasis on dysfunction is particularly useful for identifying the gaps within Nigeria's security architecture. Structural Functionalism holds that when a structure fails to perform its functions effectively, the entire system suffers from dysfunction, which may manifest as instability, violence, or loss of public trust (Easton, 1965). This perspective is relevant to understanding why, despite the institutional presence of intelligence agencies like the DSS, Kaduna State has continued to experience persistent security breakdowns. The theory thus assists in diagnosing systemic failures and guiding recommendations for structural reforms.

Finally, Almond's theory underlines the interdependence of political structures, emphasising that intelligence gathering should not operate in isolation but as part of an integrated system of governance. This reinforces the study's aim of investigating not just the operational capacity of the DSS in Kaduna State, but also the broader institutional, technological, and policy environment that supports or hinders its function. Hence, the theory serves as a coherent analytical foundation for evaluating both the effectiveness and limitations of intelligence gathering in achieving national security goals in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design within a mixed-methods framework, enabling both quantitative and qualitative assessments of intelligence gathering and national security within the operational context of the Department of State Services (DSS) in Kaduna State. This design was considered appropriate because it integrates statistical generalisations with rich contextual insights, thereby capturing the multidimensional nature of intelligence operations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The study population comprised 829 DSS officers stationed across Kaduna State, as confirmed through official communication with the Kaduna State Command. To derive a representative sample, the Taro Yamane (1967) formula was applied at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error: The formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$\frac{1+N(e)^2}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample size

N = Population of the study (in this case, 829)

e = Margin of error (in this case 5%)

Therefore:

$$n = \frac{829}{1+829(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{829}{1+829(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{829}{1+2.0725}$$

$$n = \frac{829}{3.0725}$$

$$n = 270$$

Accordingly, 270 DSS officers were selected for the quantitative component. To enrich findings and capture perspectives beyond the DSS, an additional 15 respondents were purposively drawn from the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs, Kaduna State (MISHAKS), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). For the qualitative component, 15 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were purposively conducted with strategically placed officials from these institutions. Data analysis combined quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data from the structured questionnaires were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v.25). Descriptive statistics—frequencies, percentages, and mean scores—were employed to summarise patterns of responses. For the qualitative data, thematic analysis was used: interview transcripts were reviewed, coded, and clustered into themes such as intelligence infrastructure, inter-agency collaboration, and policy gaps. This triangulation of methods enhanced the validity, reliability, and policy relevance of the study’s findings.

Data Presentation and Data Analysis

To ensure robust quantitative analysis, a total of 270 copies of a structured questionnaire were administered to officers of the Department of State Services (DSS) in Kaduna State. Out of these, 243 questionnaires were correctly filled and returned, yielding a response rate of 90%, while 27 questionnaires (10%) were either not returned or were improperly completed and thus excluded from analysis. The response rate is considered sufficient for academic research and reflects a high level of engagement by the respondents, thereby enhancing the credibility and representativeness of the study.

Table 1: Response Rate of Administered Questionnaires

Category	Number Administered	Number Retrieved	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires Distributed	270	-	100
Valid Questionnaires Retrieved	-	243	90
Invalid/Unreturned Questionnaires	-	27	10

Source: Field Survey (2024)

This high retrieval rate underscores the cooperation of the DSS Kaduna Command and supports the reliability of the quantitative data derived from the structured instrument. It also suggests that the findings drawn from this data were reflective of the broader perspectives within the department during the study period (2015–2022).

Analysis of Objective One: To Assess the Role of Intelligence Gathering in Promoting National Security in Kaduna State

Table 2: Respondents’ Views on the Role of Intelligence Gathering in National Security

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean
Intelligence gathering enables early detection and prevention of threats.	138 (56.8%)	74 (30.5%)	12 (4.9%)	11 (4.5%)	8 (3.3%)	4.33
Timely intelligence improves decision-making in security operations.	121 (49.8%)	83 (34.2%)	15 (6.2%)	15 (6.2%)	9 (3.7%)	4.20
Intelligence gathering strengthens inter-agency coordination.	104 (42.8%)	89 (36.6%)	19 (7.8%)	20 (8.2%)	11 (4.5%)	4.05
Effective intelligence helps reduce the frequency of violent attacks.	113 (46.5%)	88 (36.2%)	17 (7.0%)	15 (6.2%)	10 (4.1%)	4.15
Intelligence operations are essential for protecting critical infrastructure.	126 (51.9%)	79 (32.5%)	18 (7.4%)	11 (4.5%)	9 (3.7%)	4.25

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 2 shows strong consensus among DSS officers in Kaduna State on the strategic importance of intelligence gathering, with mean scores ranging from 4.05 to 4.33. Respondents rated early detection and prevention of threats highest (Mean = 4.33), reflecting intelligence as the foundation of proactive security. Other key functions highlighted include protection of critical infrastructure (4.25), improved decision-making (4.20), reduction of violent attacks (4.15), and strengthened inter-agency coordination (4.05). These findings align with scholarly views (Lowenthal, 2006; Clarke & Knake, 2010; Scott & Jackson, 2004) and Nigeria’s 2019 National Security Strategy.

Qualitative insights from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) reinforce these perceptions. Respondents cited examples where DSS intelligence enabled timely arrests, disrupted terrorist supply chains, informed government policy, enhanced joint operations, and protected vital infrastructure. Such accounts illustrate how intelligence functions as both an operational tool and a strategic resource in Kaduna’s volatile security environment. Taken together, the results affirm that intelligence gathering is central to Nigeria’s national security framework, particularly in high-risk states like Kaduna. Its value lies not only in threat prevention but also in fostering collaboration, guiding decision-making, and safeguarding socio-economic assets—underscoring intelligence as the bedrock of effective security governance.

Analysis of Objective Two – Examine the Methods and Tools Employed by the Department of State Services (DSS) in Kaduna State for Intelligence Gathering (2015–2022)

Table 3: Methods and Tools Used by DSS in Intelligence Gathering

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean
The DSS relies heavily on Human Intelligence (HUMINT) from informants and field agents.	126 (51.9%)	81 (33.3%)	15 (6.2%)	13 (5.3%)	8 (3.3%)	4.25
Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) such as phone tapping and electronic surveillance is utilized.	111 (45.7%)	86 (35.4%)	19 (7.8%)	15 (6.2%)	12 (4.9%)	4.11
Surveillance tools such as CCTV, drones, and tracking devices are deployed in operations.	92 (37.9%)	88 (36.2%)	27 (11.1%)	21 (8.6%)	15 (6.2%)	3.90
The DSS maintains strategic partnerships with other security agencies to exchange intelligence.	103 (42.4%)	96 (39.5%)	18 (7.4%)	16 (6.6%)	10 (4.1%)	4.09
The agency has adopted cyber intelligence and ICT-based monitoring tools in recent years.	98 (40.3%)	89 (36.6%)	23 (9.5%)	20 (8.2%)	13 (5.3%)	4.00

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 3 shows that DSS officers in Kaduna State rely on a diverse set of intelligence tools, with Human Intelligence (HUMINT) rated highest (Mean = 4.25), confirming its centrality in local operations. Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) followed closely (Mean = 4.11), reflecting the growing role of electronic intercepts in tackling terrorism, kidnapping, and organized crime. Other tools, such as surveillance technologies (Mean = 3.90), inter-agency intelligence sharing (Mean = 4.09), and cyber intelligence (Mean = 4.00), were also acknowledged, though resource, infrastructural, and legal limitations constrain their full deployment.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) corroborate these findings. DSS officers stressed HUMINT as the foundation of intelligence, with informants and covert missions often triggering further surveillance. SIGINT was highlighted for intercepting communications and tracking criminal networks, though hindered by decryption and equipment gaps. Technical surveillance tools like drones and CCTV were praised for their impact but noted as costly and unevenly deployed.

Respondents also emphasized growing inter-agency collaboration and the emerging role of cyber intelligence in monitoring online extremist activities, while pointing to gaps in digital infrastructure and training. Taken together, the findings reveal a multi-layered intelligence architecture in Kaduna State where HUMINT and SIGINT dominate, while surveillance, cyber intelligence, and inter-agency coordination are expanding incrementally. This demonstrates both the adaptability and constraints of Nigeria’s intelligence system in addressing complex and evolving security threats.

Analysis of Objective Three – Identify the Key Institutional, Operational, and Technological Challenges Confronting the DSS in Intelligence Gathering and Threat Prevention in Kaduna State

Table 4: Challenges Confronting the DSS in Intelligence Gathering and Threat Prevention

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean
Lack of advanced surveillance technologies limits the DSS’s capacity to monitor security threats.	121 (49.8%)	78 (32.1%)	18 (7.4%)	16 (6.6%)	10 (4.1%)	4.16
Inter-agency rivalry and poor information sharing hinder collaborative intelligence efforts.	108 (44.4%)	79 (32.5%)	22 (9.1%)	21 (8.6%)	13 (5.3%)	4.03
Inadequate training and capacity development reduce the operational effectiveness of field officers.	99 (40.7%)	87 (35.8%)	25 (10.3%)	20 (8.2%)	12 (4.9%)	3.99
Bureaucratic delays in intelligence reporting and implementation weaken proactive responses.	94 (38.7%)	91 (37.4%)	28 (11.5%)	18 (7.4%)	12 (4.9%)	3.97
Limited funding for intelligence operations affects logistics and resource mobilization.	112 (46.1%)	84 (34.6%)	20 (8.2%)	16 (6.6%)	11 (4.5%)	4.11

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 4 reveals that DSS officers in Kaduna State widely recognize multiple challenges undermining intelligence gathering, with mean scores ranging from 3.97 to 4.16. The most critical was the lack of advanced surveillance technology (Mean = 4.16), which limits real-time

monitoring of threats such as terrorism and banditry. Inadequate funding (Mean = 4.11) and inter-agency rivalry (Mean = 4.03) were also identified as major obstacles, alongside limited training opportunities (Mean = 3.99) and bureaucratic delays (Mean = 3.97). These findings reflect broader structural weaknesses within Nigeria's security architecture, including technological gaps, financial constraints, poor institutional synergy, and systemic inertia.

Key Informant Interviews reinforced these quantitative insights. Officers highlighted outdated surveillance tools, rivalries that undermine intelligence sharing, and insufficient capacity for cyber and digital intelligence. They also stressed inadequate training in emerging fields like cyber forensics and the damaging effect of bureaucratic bottlenecks that delay the use of actionable intelligence. Collectively, the interviews underscore how institutional, technological, and operational deficiencies converge to constrain the DSS's effectiveness in Kaduna State. Overall, the findings point to an intelligence system that is overstretched and reactive, struggling to adapt to the evolving security environment. Addressing technological modernization, sustainable funding, inter-agency collaboration, continuous capacity development, and streamlined decision-making are critical to strengthening intelligence-led security responses in Nigeria.

Analysis of Objective Four: Propose Strategic Measures for Enhancing the Effectiveness of Intelligence Gathering by the DSS to Improve National Security Outcomes

Table 5: Strategic Measures to Enhance Intelligence Gathering by the DSS

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean Score
The DSS should be equipped with modern surveillance and digital intelligence technologies.	134 (55.1%)	77 (31.7%)	14 (5.8%)	11 (4.5%)	7 (2.9%)	4.32
Inter-agency collaboration should be improved through joint training and shared intelligence hubs.	121 (49.8%)	88 (36.2%)	16 (6.6%)	11 (4.5%)	7 (2.9%)	4.26
Continuous capacity-building and retraining programmes should be institutionalised.	117 (48.1%)	92 (37.9%)	15 (6.2%)	12 (4.9%)	7 (2.9%)	4.23
Bureaucratic processes should be streamlined to allow timely response to intelligence reports.	109 (44.9%)	95 (39.1%)	17 (7.0%)	13 (5.3%)	9 (3.7%)	4.16
The DSS should establish grassroots intelligence networks through community engagement.	113 (46.5%)	91 (37.4%)	18 (7.4%)	12 (4.9%)	9 (3.7%)	4.19

Source: Field Survey (2024)

The findings from Table 5 indicate that DSS officers in Kaduna State face five critical challenges undermining intelligence gathering and operational effectiveness. The most pressing was the lack of advanced surveillance and digital technologies (Mean = 4.16), followed by inter-agency rivalry (Mean = 4.03), inadequate training (Mean = 3.99), limited funding (Mean = 3.95), and bureaucratic delays (Mean = 3.97). These challenges, supported by relevant literature, reflect deep institutional, technological, and procedural weaknesses that compromise timely threat detection and coordinated responses in high-risk environments.

Complementary insights from Table 5.3.4 and KIIs outline strategic reforms needed to strengthen DSS capacity. Key proposals include technological modernisation through AI, GIS, and drone-enabled surveillance (Mean = 4.32), institutionalising inter-agency collaboration via joint intelligence fusion centres (Mean = 4.26), and continuous officer retraining in emerging fields such as cyber forensics and counter-radicalisation (Mean = 4.23). Additional recommendations emphasise streamlining bureaucratic processes to reduce delays (Mean = 4.16) and formalising

grassroots intelligence networks through community engagement (Mean = 4.19). Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative data converge on a reform agenda that prioritises modern technology, institutional synergy, human capacity development, bureaucratic efficiency, and community participation. Implementing these measures would significantly improve DSS responsiveness, enhance Nigeria's intelligence architecture, and contribute to more effective national security outcomes.

Discussion of Major Findings

The findings of this study affirm that intelligence gathering remains central to national security in volatile environments such as Kaduna State. Survey responses (Table 5.3.1) and KII testimonies highlighted the crucial role of the Department of State Services (DSS) in conflict prevention, threat identification, and response coordination. These findings support Lowenthal's (2015) view that intelligence underpins both policy and operational success, while also emphasising that its effectiveness depends not only on collection but on the timeliness and strategic utilisation of information for public safety.

Analysis of DSS methods (Table 5.3.2) revealed reliance on both traditional mechanisms—such as surveillance and informant networks—and limited application of modern tools like digital forensics. Respondents consistently identified the inadequate use of advanced technologies such as drones, cyber intelligence software, and geospatial mapping as a critical weakness. This concern, echoed in KIIs, aligns with Omitola (2020), who attributes Nigeria's intelligence underdevelopment to poor investment and prioritisation. The overdependence on HUMINT without adequate SIGINT or IMINT support reduces the agency's capacity to anticipate and counter asymmetric threats.

Persistent challenges further constrain DSS operations, including inter-agency rivalry, weak training and capacity building, outdated infrastructure, bureaucratic delays, and funding shortfalls (Table 5.3.3). These findings mirror Akinbobola and Tella's (2021) argument that systemic deficiencies undermine Nigeria's security institutions. Respondents and KII participants stressed the need for reforms to address duplication of intelligence, delayed utilisation of reports, and lack of coordinated platforms. Strategic measures proposed (Table 5.3.4)—notably technological

modernisation, enhanced inter-agency collaboration, continuous officer training, and community intelligence networks—were widely endorsed. These recommendations reflect the structural-functional perspective (Almond & Powell, 1966), underscoring that the effectiveness of intelligence as a subsystem directly shapes the resilience of the wider national security architecture.

Conclusion

This study concludes that intelligence gathering remains a cornerstone of national security, particularly in fragile and high-risk environments like Kaduna State. The Department of State Services, as the country's foremost domestic intelligence agency, has a statutory role in identifying, analysing, and responding to internal threats to Nigeria's territorial integrity and public safety. The evidence presented shows that while the DSS in Kaduna performs vital intelligence functions, its operations are hindered by institutional inefficiencies, technological limitations, and inter-agency distrust. The findings also suggest that threats in Kaduna State—ranging from terrorism to criminality—require integrated intelligence responses supported by advanced tools, well-trained personnel, and seamless collaboration across government agencies. The inadequacies in funding, personnel development, and field logistics further exacerbate operational challenges, reducing the DSS's ability to act decisively in the face of real-time security threats.

Moreover, the study underscores the underutilisation of community-based intelligence, which, if effectively coordinated, could enhance early warning systems and preventive action. Conclusively, the study affirms that the efficacy of intelligence gathering in promoting national security depends not only on the capabilities of the DSS but also on the strength of institutional cooperation, community trust, and political will. Addressing these factors through targeted reforms and investment can greatly enhance the DSS's impact and help Nigeria overcome its complex security challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The federal government should allocate dedicated funds to modernise the DSS's technological capabilities, including the acquisition of cyber surveillance systems, geospatial intelligence platforms, drone technology, and data analytics software. This will improve situational awareness and threat prediction.
- ii. A Joint Intelligence Fusion Centre (JIFC) should be established in Kaduna State to facilitate real-time information sharing between the DSS and other security agencies. Periodic inter-agency training, communication protocols, and shared threat databases should be institutionalised.
- iii. The DSS should implement a continuous professional development programme, focusing on modern intelligence tradecraft, data analysis, cyber security, counterterrorism, and community engagement strategies. Collaborations with international intelligence training centres should also be explored.
- iv. The DSS should formalise its grassroots intelligence channels by setting up Community Intelligence Cells (CICs) in local government areas, recruiting local informants, and integrating them into the agency's early warning systems. This will build trust and increase the agency's reach into underserved areas.
- v. The Presidency and National Security Adviser should review internal DSS workflows to reduce response time to intelligence reports. In addition, budgetary processes should be streamlined to ensure timely disbursement of operational funds to state commands such as Kaduna.

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