

# Long Distance Trekking and Students Academic Work in Public Universities in Nigeria: Psychological Implication and Universities Administrators Policy Making Process

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## **Abstract:**

This paper investigates the impact of long-distance trekking on students' academic performance in Nigerian public universities. Many students face the challenge of commuting long distances daily due to inadequate housing facilities near campuses and the absence of efficient transportation systems. Drawing on secondary data from online and print resources, the study reveals the detrimental effects of this commuting challenge on students' health, psychological well-being, and academic activities. The physical exhaustion caused by prolonged trekking depletes energy levels, leaving students unable to fully concentrate during lectures or dedicate time to personal study and assignments. Over time, this diminishes their ability to meet academic expectations and compete effectively with peers who have easier access to campus facilities. The findings further highlight that trekking contributes to a decline in students' mental health and overall academic productivity. The stress of navigating long distances, coupled with the lack of time for rest and revision, exacerbates the problem, ultimately affecting their preparedness for tests, examinations, and other academic demands. This situation underscores the urgent need for intervention. To mitigate these challenges, the paper proposes several solutions. Public universities should collaborate with private partners to establish affordable and reliable transportation systems that connect students' residences, hostels, and campuses. Additionally, the government should consider subsidizing

bicycle purchases to offer students a cost-effective and sustainable commuting option. Providing financial palliatives, such as stipends or grants, could further ease students' financial burdens and improve their access to academic resources.

**Keywords:** Trekking, Universities, Students, Academic Work.

## **Introduction Literature**

Many students in Nigerian universities now engaged in this act of trekking to their campuses because their transport fares had sporadically increased due to the fuel hikes. Without a doubt, this risky behaviour exposes them to dangers such as kidnappers or ritualists, especially considering the country's current state of insecurity (Edema, 2024). Students and teachers and other school staff are feeling the pinch. Many students commute long distances to campuses, and the rising transportation costs, along with stagnant or barely increased salaries, are creating financial stress. This is likely to impact staff morale and, consequently, the quality of education being delivered." He explained that students, particularly those from low-income families or rural areas, faced an even more precarious situation (Edema, 2024). These stories highlighted the challenges faced by students in Nigeria's current economic climate, exacerbated by the rising cost of fuel. Wahab (2024) reported that many students in educational institutions across Nigeria now trek a long distance to their respective institutions learning. Many students in different parts of the country have resorted to trekking to school due to the significant increase in transportation costs occasioned by the recent fuel price increase (Ibrahim, et al., 2024). It is important to examine the impact of long distance trekking on students of public universities in Nigeria.

## **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of long distance trekking on students of public universities in Nigeria. The specific objective is to:

1. Find out the impact of long distance trekking on students' health in public universities in Nigeria.
2. Assess the impact of long distance trekking on students' academic work in public universities in Nigeria.
3. Find out the impact of long distance trekking on students' psychology in public universities in Nigeria.

## **Literature Review**

### **Concept of University**

According to the FRN (2013), university education is expected to make optimum contribution to national development through the intensification and diversification of its programs for the development of high level human resources base within the context of the needs of the nation; make professional course contents to reflect Nigeria's national requirements; make all students, part of the general program of all-round improvement and to offer general study courses such as history of ideas, philosophy of knowledge and nationalism. Universities are expected to encourage and disseminate their research results to both government and industries. Universities are expected to inculcate community spirit in their students through projects and action research. They are expected to ensure that faculty in their professional fields have relevant industrial and specialized experience.

Public universities are universities owned by the government. Public universities are universities established to provide post-secondary schools for Nigerian. Public universities are universities established by act of parliament to serve the interest of the general public. Public universities deal

with the provision of teaching, research and communities services (Ogunode, 2020). The objectives of the universities in Nigerian Higher education, including professional education has the following aims: the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and societies; the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate environment; the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community; the acquisition of an overview of the local and external environments (FGN, 2014).

Public universities in Nigeria are grouped into federal and state owned universities. The federal universities are owned by the federal government of Nigeria while the state universities are owned by the state government. The total number of federal and state public universities are about 62 and 63 across the country (Aiyedun, et al., 2021).

### **Concept of Students**

Students are learners in educational institutions. Studentship started from the early child education to basic education to secondary school education and ends in the higher institutions. Higher institutions students are learners in the higher institutions. Higher institutions students are matured learners. Students in higher institutions are aged from 18 years and above. Students of higher institutions are ready for learning and research. Some of the students of higher institutions are dependent while others are independent (Ogunode, Audu, & Ahaotu, 2020). Students are the focal point of school administration. Therefore' whichever the school head does must take into account the students, their welfare, and other activities that affect their lives and stay in school. School are set up not for teachers, not for parents, not for educational administrators but for students. The various decisions taken by school administrators therefore depend upon knowing the general and specific needs of the student population.

### **Concept of Long distance Trekking**

Long distance trekking means that long movement from one point to another place. Long distance trekking involve movement of people and loads from one place to another place that takes a long period of time (Okpunukpang, Ogunode, & Suleiman, 2024).

### **Impact of Trekking on Students Academic Work**

There are many impacts of long distance trekking on students of public universities. Some of the impacts includes; heathy problem, negative influence on academic work and causing psychological problems on the students.

### **Health Challenges**

Long distance trekking to campuses by undergraduates of universities in Nigeria have been linked to various health challenges that have affected the students. Ugbede-Ojo (2024) stated that the physical exertion from trekking long distances also affects students' health. Exposure to adverse weather conditions such as heat, rain, or dust often leads to illnesses such as malaria, respiratory infections, or heat exhaustion from climate change (Olatunde-Aiyedun, et al., 2022). When students frequently fall ill, they tend to miss school, leading to poor attendance, which directly impacts their academic performance. In high institutions, absenteeism due to illness is a widespread issue, more so in areas with limited access to healthcare. When students fall ill, they often lack timely medical attention, which extends their absence from school. This recurring absenteeism leads to missed lessons, making it difficult for students to keep up with their academic responsibilities. Also, Okpunukpang, et al (2024) noted that Continuous trekking to campuses by tertiary institutions students can lead to health challenges. Many students in the Nigerian tertiary institutions are down with different health problems because of the trekking they are doing every day.

## Academic work

Long distance trekking to campuses by universities students in Nigeria leads to late coming for lectures due to the long distance covered to arrive the campuses. Edema (2024) concluded that for students who manage to continue attending school, the stress of financial strain on their families can affect their focus and overall performance. Extracurricular activities, which often require additional transport or participation fees, have also seen reduced involvement. Students who previously stayed late for activities, tutorials, or extra lessons now leave earlier to save on transportation costs, thereby missing out on valuable learning opportunities.”. Trekking a long distance to campuses by undergraduate students in Nigerian tertiary institutions can led to late coming for lectures in the various institutions. Most undergraduate students in Nigeria goes top lectures late because of distance and trekking (Okpunukpang, et al., 2024). Mhiliwa (2015) discovered that longer distance travelled by students to school made them reach schools late and with empty stomachs.

The challenges faced by Nigerian university students due to long-distance trekking highlight the interplay between physical fatigue and academic performance. According to Okpunukpang et al. (2024), prolonged daily commuting, particularly by trekking, significantly reduces the time students can allocate to academic activities. Students often return home late, exhausted from their journey, with insufficient energy to engage in personal study or complete assignments. This not only affects their preparedness for examinations and tests but also creates disparities between students with easy access to campus and those living farther away. The physical toll of trekking depletes energy levels, leaving students unable to maximize their intellectual capabilities. Personal study time, which is essential for reinforcing classroom lessons, becomes compromised. Conversely, students who live closer to campus or have access to reliable transportation can utilize their commuting time more productively—either for academic tasks or for much-needed rest, both of which are crucial for academic success.

Furthermore, Mohammed, Olatunde-Aiyedun, and Bello (2024), in their study on distance learning lecturers’ readiness for open educational resources, underscore the importance of accessibility and resource efficiency in educational settings. While their focus is on lecturers in a digital context, the principle of resource availability aligns with the need to address physical and infrastructural barriers for students. Providing better transportation systems, affordable on-campus housing, or digital tools to minimize physical commuting challenges could help level the academic playing field. Addressing these trekking challenges requires institutional support, such as better transport systems and the provision of hostels near campuses. By reducing the physical strain on students, universities can enhance their overall academic performance and mental well-being.

On lecture attendance, trekking long distance to campuses affects students’ academic work by reducing the rate at which they attend lectures. Edna (2024) noted that many students in Nigeria travel long distances daily to attend school, especially in areas where quality educational institutions are sparse. With transportation costs rising steeply, some parents are finding it increasingly difficult to cover the daily commute expenses for their children. This has led to an increase in absenteeism, with some students unable to attend school regularly due to the unaffordable cost of transport. In extreme cases, students have been forced to withdraw from school entirely, threatening their academic futures. Edna (2024) noted that many students in Nigeria travel long distances daily to attend school, especially in areas where quality educational institutions are sparse. With transportation costs rising steeply, some parents are finding it increasingly difficult to cover the daily commute expenses for their children. This has led to an increase in absenteeism, with some students unable to attend school regularly due to the unaffordable cost of transport. In extreme cases, students have been forced to withdraw from school entirely, threatening their academic futures. Trekking long distance to campuses affects students’ academic work by reducing the rate at which they attend lectures.

## **Psychological issues**

Long distance trekking to campuses by undergraduate students of Nigerian universities left them with many psychological issues such as frustration, stress and low morale to carry out academic work. The continuous trekking of students to campuses that covers a lot of distance make them feel insecure, poor and discriminatory. They are insulted, mock and even stop to enter lectures hall when late. Students that mostly trek to campuses miss out learning opportunities that may affect their academic performance. Edema (2024) concluded that for students who manage to continue attending school, the stress of financial strain on their families and on them can affect their focus and overall performance in the schools. Long distance trekking by students to campuses produces stress and frustration on them that results to psychological problems on the students. Ugbede-Ojo (2024) concluded that trekking long distances also takes a toll on students' mental well-being. The daily routine of waking up early and embarking on a tiring journey to school creates stress, frustration, and a lack of motivation. Over time, students may start viewing school as a burden rather than an opportunity, which leads to disengagement from their studies. In schools, where resources may already be stretched thin, the mental strain caused by trekking can have a lasting impact. Students who are demotivated and mentally exhausted are less likely to participate in class, complete assignments, or take exams seriously. This cycle of disengagement results in further academic underperformance. Public tertiary institutions located far from students' hotels or residents are among the most affected by the issue of trekking. In many cases, students walk long distances through unsafe or poorly maintained roads to reach school. Muhamme and Abu (2019) concluded that long distance walking to school by students affects their psychology and also affects their health.

## **Findings**

The paper showed that long distance trekking to campuses by public universities students has negative influence on their academic work. The paper discovered that the students' health, academic work and their psychology has been affected by long distance trekking to campuses for lectures in the various public universities.

## **Psychological Implication and Universities Administrators Policy Making Formulation**

The paper disclosed that long distance trekking by public universities students in Nigeria has implication on the students' psychology, health and influence their academic work negatively. It is expected of the universities administrators in Nigeria to come up with policies to address the problem long distance trekking to campuses is having on the students by coming up with transportation scheme that will reduce the impact of subsidize removal on fuel and economic hardship on the students. Public universities in Nigeria should collaborate with private institutions and implement public private partnership transportation scheme that will provide means of transportation for students from hotels to campuses on a subsidized rate. Students of universities in Nigeria should be encouraged to adopt bicycle system of transportation to campuses. This can be achieved by subsidizing the cost of bicycle for students of universities in Nigeria. Governments should increase the budgetary allocation to student's loan scheme to cover many students.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper critically looked at the impact of long distance trekking on student academic work in public Universities in Nigeria. After reviewing of many literature on the subject matter, the concludes that long distance trekking to campuses by public universities students has negative influence on their academic work. The paper discovered that the students' health, academic work and their psychology has been affected by long distance trekking to campuses for lectures in the various public universities.

Based on this, the paper recommends that the all public universities should arrange transportation system based on public private partnership for students' movement from homes/hotels to campuses. Government should subsidize the purchase of bicycle for students to aid their movement to campuses. Government should provide palliative for students of higher institutions to support their academic and increase the funding of students loan scheme to cover many students in the programme.

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