



Strategic Knowledge Partnership and Military Performance Management: Positioning the Nigerian Army University Biu within Nigerian Army Effectiveness

*Suleiman Abubakar Babagana¹, Sani Babayaro², Olorunfemi Ololade Adedoyin³.

*Department of Management, Faculty of Arts and Management Sciences,
Nigerian Army University Biu, Nigeria.*

*Corresponding Author: suleiman.babagana@naub.edu.ng

Abstract

Nigeria's contemporary security environment is characterized by insurgency, terrorism, banditry, and other asymmetric threats that has placed increasing demands on the Nigerian Army not only in operational terms but also in leadership development, institutional learning, and performance management. While the Nigerian Army University Biu (NAUB) is a conventional, non-operational university, its potential role in supporting military effectiveness through knowledge-based engagement remains underexplored in existing literature. This conceptual paper addresses the problem of limited scholarly articulation of structured academic-military knowledge partnerships in Nigeria by examining how NAUB can be positioned as a strategic knowledge partner to the Nigerian Army. The objectives of the study are to examine the role of conventional universities in non-operational military support, synthesize relevant theoretical perspectives, and develop a conceptual framework linking NAUB's academic functions to military effectiveness and performance management. Adopting a qualitative conceptual research design based on integrative literature review, the study is anchored in civil-military relations theory, professional military education theory, knowledge transfer theory, innovation diffusion theory, counterinsurgency theory, and military performance management theory. The paper proposes a conceptual framework that connects NAUB's education, research, innovation, and advisory roles to institutional outcomes such as leadership development, innovation readiness, and performance measurement capacity. The study recommends the formal institutionalization of structured academic-military knowledge partnerships that respect civil-military boundaries while strengthening learning-oriented military performance management systems. The paper contributes theoretically and policy-wise by clarifying how conventional universities can support military effectiveness without operational involvement.

Keywords: Military Effectiveness, Military Performance Management, Nigerian Army University Biu, Professional Military Education, Strategic Knowledge Partnership.

1. Introduction

Nigeria's security landscape has grown increasingly complex over the past two decades, marked by persistent insurgency, terrorism, banditry, communal conflicts, and other forms of asymmetric violence. These security challenges have exerted sustained pressure on the Nigerian Army,

requiring not only tactical and operational responses but also strategic adaptability, institutional learning, leadership development, and effective performance management (Obuh et al., 2021; Olowonih & Musa, 2024). Contemporary military scholarship emphasizes that



modern armed forces operate in environments characterized by uncertainty, rapid change, and civil-military interpenetration, making knowledge-based capabilities central to military effectiveness (Snider & Matthews, 2005; Antrobus, 2022).

Globally, defense institutions increasingly rely on partnerships with civilian and conventional universities to strengthen Professional Military Education, applied research, policy analysis, and innovation ecosystems (Woodward, 2017; Powell, 2025). Such institutions operate outside military command structures yet contribute intellectual diversity, analytical rigor, and normative perspectives that enhance strategic decision-making and organizational performance. The growing involvement of universities in defense-related knowledge production reflects a broader shift toward evidence-based military management and learning-oriented defense organizations (McChrystal et al., 2015).

The Nigerian Army University Biu occupies a distinctive position within Nigeria's higher education and defense architecture. Established as a conventional university, NAUB is not a military academy and does not engage in operational planning, command, or field deployment. Nevertheless, it possesses multidisciplinary academic expertise in management, social sciences, engineering, data analytics, and security-related fields, alongside an institutional mandate to support national development. Despite this potential, there is limited scholarly examination of how NAUB or similar conventional universities can be systematically positioned as strategic knowledge partners contributing to military effectiveness and performance management in Nigeria.

Existing Nigerian defense literature has focused largely on operational responses to security threats, civil-military tensions, and

counterinsurgency outcomes (Isa, 2022; Obuh et al., 2021). Comparatively little attention has been paid to institutional knowledge partnerships, performance management systems, and the role of academic research and education in strengthening military effectiveness. This gap constrains both theoretical development and policy innovation regarding sustainable, knowledge-driven military capability development.

Against this background, this study conceptually positions NAUB as a strategic knowledge partner to the Nigerian Army. Rather than advocating operational involvement, the paper examines how academic education, applied research, innovation, civil-military engagement, and Military Performance Management frameworks can support Army effectiveness through non-operational means. Drawing on six interrelated theoretical perspectives, the study develops an integrated conceptual framework that links NAUB's knowledge-based functions to military institutional outcomes. In doing so, the study contributes to defense and management scholarship while offering policy-relevant insights for structuring academic-military collaboration in Nigeria.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Examine the role of conventional universities in supporting military effectiveness through non-operational, knowledge-based engagement;
2. Synthesize relevant literature on professional military education, civil-military relations, applied defense research, counterinsurgency, and military performance management;
3. Develop a conceptual framework positioning the Nigerian Army University Biu as a strategic knowledge partner to the Nigerian Army; and



4. Analyze the theoretical, policy, and institutional implications of adopting a strategic knowledge partnership model for military performance management in the Nigerian Army.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Professional Military Education (PME)

Professional Military Education (PME) remains a cornerstone of military professionalism and effectiveness (Snider & Matthews, 2005; Antrobus, 2022). PME's objectives have expanded from traditional command and control training to include interdisciplinary analyses, ethical reasoning, civil-military cooperation, and strategic adaptability (IPME 2024; IPME 2025). Recent scholarship emphasizes the need for PME to cultivate soft skills including critical thinking, cultural literacy, and ethical judgement to enable officers to navigate complex environments shaped by political, social, and technological change (Cherni & Slimeni, 2024; Kerr & Robinson, 2024). These developments underscore the argument that PME must be dynamic and reflexive rather than purely doctrinal.

Civilian universities and defense-oriented institutions now play increasing roles in expanding the scope of PME beyond military academies by providing interdisciplinary education in strategic studies, leadership theory, and innovation management (Woodward, 2017; Powell, 2025). The introduction of AI tools into PME is also transforming learning modalities, enabling adaptive, personalized instruction and data-driven performance evaluation for officers (Biggs, 2025). However, integrating AI into military education requires careful consideration of ethical and pedagogical challenges, ensuring that technological augmentation complements, rather than replaces, human judgement (Biggs, 2025).

Within this contemporary context, NAUB's academic programs can support PME by offering theory-based instruction, analytical skills development, and critical reflection on strategic issues and thus, preparing officers for uncertainty, complexity, and ethical dilemmas without engaging in operational command functions.

2.2 Civil-Military Relations (CMR)

Civil-Military Relations (CMR) scholarship continues to explore the balance between military autonomy and democratic accountability (Huntington, 1957; Janowitz, 1977). Recent bibliometric assessments reveal that coordination between civil and military institutions, especially during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, enhances legitimacy, trust, and societal resilience (e.g., civil and military integration literature; 2025 assessment). This literature underscores that strong CMR frameworks contribute to institutional adaptability and public confidence in security initiatives.

Universities, as neutral epistemic communities, have emerged in recent literature as informational bridges between civilian policy environments and military institutions. They can facilitate dialogue, generate policy analyses, and produce normative insights that contribute to legitimacy and accountability (Oladipo, 2020; Obuh et al., 2021). Additionally, studies of defense-government partnerships highlight the role of academic research in shaping civil-military discourse beyond operational contexts (Uddin & Kabir, 2024), demonstrating how armed forces' involvement in higher education governance fosters human resource development and institutional integration in broader national development agendas. NAUB's potential contribution lies in its ability to strengthen civil-military understanding through research, policy analysis, and educational programs that enhance awareness of civilian governance



norms and contribute to informed public debate.

2.3 Applied Research and Innovation

Applied research is central to military adaptation in dynamic security environments (Ezeajughu, 2021; Olowonihi & Musa, 2024). Defense innovation research increasingly emphasizes multidisciplinary collaboration involving academia, industry, and military institutions (e.g., military-industry-university nexus models). These collaborations have been shown to accelerate technological development, sustain innovation capacity, and enhance strategic competitiveness in global defense ecosystems.

Contemporary literature on armed forces innovation highlights several key trends:

- i. Research partnerships yielding dual-use technologies, particularly in AI, autonomous systems, and data analytics, that provide competitive advantages in command, control, and information environments.
- ii. Civilian academic institutions acting as incubators of conceptual models and ethical frameworks to accompany technological advancements in military practice.
- iii. Knowledge transfer frameworks that promote codification and transfer of academic knowledge into military planning and doctrine (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Argote & Ingram, 2000).

Emerging studies propose that defense research ecosystems are most effective when they leverage academia's theoretical and analytical capacities alongside industry's product development expertise, thereby enhancing innovation readiness and organizational learning.

NAUB can contribute to this landscape by engaging in applied research that synthesizes technological insights with strategic studies, while ensuring that research outputs are accessible and

relevant to Nigerian Army planners through translation into policy briefs, conceptual models, and analytical tools.

2.4 Peace Operations and Counterinsurgency (COIN)

Contemporary counterinsurgency and peace operations scholarship emphasizes multi-domain knowledge combining socio-cultural understanding with operational insight (Nagl, 2002; Cohn & Kinsella, 2004). The rise of hybrid threats and population-centric conflicts has reinforced the need for frameworks that integrate civil, political, and military considerations. In this vein, academic research contributes to wider understanding of insurgent motivations, governance dynamics, and resilience strategies.

Universities also play a pivotal role in conceptualizing peace operations by providing interdisciplinary perspectives that inform how military organizations engage with civil societies and partner institutions. By producing frameworks that assist in scenario planning, risk assessment, and conflict transformation, academic institutions contribute to enhanced preparedness within military organizations without taking part in field operations themselves.

2.5 Military Performance Management (MPM)

Military Performance Management (MPM) literature has progressively shifted from narrow, output-based assessments toward broader institutional and organizational perspectives on military effectiveness. Early approaches to performance in military contexts focused largely on operational outcomes and efficiency; however, contemporary scholarship emphasizes that performance in armed forces is shaped by leadership, organizational culture, learning capacity, and strategic alignment (Kaplan & Norton, 1996; McChrystal et al., 2015). This shift reflects growing recognition of the military



as a complex social organization rather than a purely technical system.

Soeters' work provides a critical sociological lens for understanding MPM in military institutions. He argues that military performance cannot be adequately captured through generic managerial metrics transferred from the private sector, as such tools often fail to account for the distinctive institutional characteristics of armed forces, including hierarchy, professional norms, discipline, and mission command (Soeters, 2018; Soeters & van den Berg, 2020). From this perspective, effective MPM must balance formal performance indicators with qualitative assessments of leadership, cohesion, professionalism, and ethical conduct. This approach aligns with broader military sociology literature that cautions against metric-driven management practices that may undermine adaptability and professional judgement.

Recent defense management studies reinforce this position by highlighting the importance of performance systems that function as learning and alignment mechanisms rather than mere evaluative tools (Antrobus, 2022; Powell, 2025). Adapted frameworks such as the Balanced Scorecard have been used in military settings to link strategic objectives with training, personnel development, and organizational learning, provided they are contextualized to mission requirements rather than efficiency alone (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). Within this literature, MPM is increasingly viewed as an integrative platform connecting Professional Military Education, innovation, and institutional effectiveness.

In the Nigerian Army context, the complexity of internal security operations and civil-military engagement underscores the need for performance frameworks that go beyond operational metrics. Conceptual, research-driven contributions from academic institutions such as NAUB

can support MPM by developing context-sensitive models and analytical tools that enhance strategic alignment and organizational learning, while respecting the non-operational role of the university. This positioning aligns with Soeters' argument that sustainable military performance is grounded in institutional reflexivity and knowledge-based management rather than command-centric control.

2.6 Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

2.6.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by six interrelated theoretical perspectives. Civil-Military Relations theory provides the normative foundation for defining appropriate boundaries between civilian academic institutions and military operations (Huntington, 1957; Janowitz, 1977; Feaver, 1999). Professional Military Education theory explains how intellectual preparation enhances leadership and strategic effectiveness (Snider & Matthews, 2005; Antrobus, 2022). Knowledge Transfer theory accounts for the conversion of academic outputs into organizational knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Argote & Ingram, 2000), while Innovation Diffusion theory explains how new ideas and practices are adopted within military institutions (Rogers, 2003). Counterinsurgency theory contextualizes the security environment in which the Nigerian Army operates (Nagl, 2002), and Military Performance Management theory integrates these perspectives by linking knowledge inputs to organizational effectiveness (Kaplan & Norton, 1996; McChrystal et al., 2015). Collectively, these theoretical perspectives provide the analytical foundation for understanding how knowledge-based institutions such as universities can contribute to military effectiveness without operational involvement. By integrating civil-military relations, professional military education,

knowledge transfer, innovation diffusion, counterinsurgency, and military performance management theories, this study establishes a coherent theoretical basis for the proposed conceptual framework.

2.6.2 Conceptual Framework

This study proposes a conceptual framework that positions the Nigerian Army University Biu (NAUB) as a strategic knowledge partner capable of strengthening institutional effectiveness within the Nigerian Army through structured Military Performance Management (MPM) processes. The framework is grounded in the growing recognition that contemporary military effectiveness extends beyond battlefield capability to include leadership quality, organizational learning, innovation capacity, and evidence-based decision-making.

The framework conceptualizes NAUB's core academic functions which are education, research, innovation, and strategic advisory support as critical knowledge inputs into the Military Performance Management system. Rather than exerting direct influence on operational activities, these academic contributions enhance the institutional architecture that supports performance planning, leadership development, and organizational adaptability. Military Performance Management therefore operates as the central translation mechanism through which knowledge generated within the university environment is systematically converted into actionable institutional capacity.

Through this mediating platform, NAUB's knowledge inputs are expected to produce intermediate outcomes including strengthened leadership development structures, research-informed planning processes, innovation readiness, and improved performance measurement capability. These outcomes collectively

reinforce organizational learning and strategic alignment within the Nigerian Army, enabling the institution to respond more effectively to complex and evolving security challenges.

Ultimately, the framework posits that a structured university-military knowledge partnership contributes to enhanced Nigerian Army effectiveness by embedding analytical rigor, professional education support, and performance-oriented governance within the institution. Importantly, this arrangement preserves appropriate civil-military boundaries by ensuring that the university's role remains academic and advisory rather than operational, while still delivering high-value institutional support.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual relationships between NAUB's strategic knowledge inputs, the Military Performance Management platform as the mediating construct, the resulting institutional outcomes, and the overarching goal of improved Nigerian Army effectiveness.

The framework assumes that sustained collaboration, supported by formal governance structures and mutual institutional commitment, is necessary for these relationships to mature into measurable performance gains. It therefore provides a structured analytical lens for understanding how indigenous academic capacity can be leveraged to support defence institutions in emerging security environments.

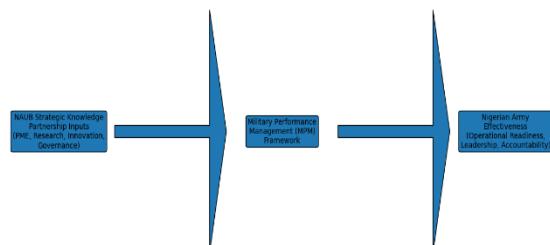


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Illustrating the Role of Nigerian Army University Biu as a Strategic Knowledge Partner in Enhancing Military



Performance Management and Nigerian Army Effectiveness.

Source: Authors conceptualization

The framework further assumes a structured knowledge partnership in which academic outputs do not directly influence operational activities but instead enhance institutional capacity through performance management processes. This positioning preserves appropriate civil-military boundaries while enabling knowledge-driven capability development

3. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative conceptual research approach based exclusively on critical and integrative literature review, appropriate for theory development and framework construction rather than empirical testing. Conceptual research is appropriate where the objective is to develop theory, clarify constructs, and propose analytical frameworks rather than generate primary empirical data (Jabareen, 2009; Gilson & Goldberg, 2015). The study relied on peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and policy documents addressing military effectiveness, Professional Military Education, civil-military relations, knowledge transfer, innovation, counterinsurgency, and Military Performance Management.

The literature was analyzed through thematic and conceptual synthesis, integrating insights across theoretical traditions to develop a coherent framework positioning NAUB as a strategic knowledge partner. No primary data were collected, and the study advances no empirical claims beyond those supported by existing scholarship.

4. Results and Discussion

The proposed conceptual framework is supported by recent empirical research demonstrating that knowledge-based institutional mechanisms comprising

education, research, and structured advisory engagement positively influence organizational performance, innovation, and learning capacity across higher education and public-sector contexts (Al-Kurdi et al., 2022; Abubakar et al., 2023; Cremades et al., 2025). These findings empirically justify the framework's assumption that NAUB's academic functions can contribute to military performance management through non-operational, knowledge-driven pathways. Evidence further indicates that organizational learning culture and knowledge-sharing practices mediate performance outcomes, including leadership development and adaptability, supporting the framework's Strategic Knowledge Partnership mechanism as the conduit through which academic inputs translate into institutional effects (Pham et al., 2023; Li et al., 2024). Recent studies also confirm that knowledge creation and sharing enhance innovation capability and strategic decision-making, reinforcing the centrality of structured academic knowledge systems in performance management (Ali & Umar, 2025).

The framework is consistent with its theoretical foundations. Civil-military relations theory supports NAUB's positioning as a non-operational academic institution influencing performance through intellectual and advisory roles rather than command functions (Feaver, 2023; 2025). Professional military education theory similarly emphasizes continuous learning and institutional knowledge integration as determinants of military effectiveness, aligning with the framework's focus on leadership development and performance measurement (Watson & McChrystal, 2022; 2025). The model also accords with knowledge transfer and innovation diffusion theories, which posit that sustained, structured partnerships facilitate capability development across institutional



boundaries (Secundo et al., 2022; Rogers, 2025).

Overall, empirical evidence from 2022–2025 confirms that structured knowledge processes and institutional learning mechanisms are significant predictors of performance outcomes. The proposed framework is therefore theoretically aligned and empirically informed, offering a concise model for understanding how NAUB can support military performance management through non-operational academic engagement.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Implications of the Study

Theoretical Implications

The study contributes to defense and military management scholarship by extending existing theories into an integrated conceptual model of academic-military engagement. By synthesizing civil-military relations theory with professional military education, knowledge transfer, and military performance management literature, the paper advances a theoretical understanding of military effectiveness as an institutional and learning-driven phenomenon. The framework demonstrates how universities can be analytically positioned within military performance ecosystems without challenging established command hierarchies or professional boundaries, thereby enriching theoretical debates on military professionalism and institutional effectiveness.

Policy and Institutional Implications

From a policy perspective, the study highlights the importance of formalizing knowledge-based partnerships between military institutions and universities through clearly defined governance arrangements. Defense policymakers may draw on the framework to design collaboration models that emphasize research support, educational alignment, and strategic advisory roles while

safeguarding operational autonomy. Institutionally, the framework implies that NAUB's academic programmes, research priorities, and engagement mechanisms should be strategically aligned with national defense objectives, thereby enhancing relevance without compromising academic independence.

Implications for Military Performance Management Practice (Conceptual)

Conceptually, the study suggests that military performance management systems should incorporate knowledge-oriented dimensions such as leadership development outcomes, organizational learning, and innovation capacity alongside traditional readiness considerations. While the paper does not advocate specific performance tools or indicators, it implies that research-informed frameworks developed by academic partners can support strategic reflection and long-term institutional effectiveness. These implications reinforce the view of performance management as a strategic learning process rather than a purely evaluative or control-oriented mechanism.

5.2 Contributions of the Study

This paper makes several contributions to defense and academic scholarship:

- **Theoretical Integration:** By synthesizing six distinct theoretical perspectives, including Civil-Military Relations, PME, Knowledge Transfer, Innovation Diffusion, COIN, and Military Performance Management, this study offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how conventional universities can support military effectiveness without operational participation.
- **Conceptual Innovation:** The framework extends traditional PME and defense management literature by articulating a knowledge partnership model



where academic institutions contribute to leadership development, research translation, performance evaluation, and innovation readiness in military contexts.

- **Policy Relevance:** The study offers actionable insights for defense policymakers seeking to institutionalize sustainable academic–military collaboration, providing a blueprint for structuring NAUB's engagement with the Nigerian Army.
- **Contextual Contribution:** It fills a specific gap in Nigerian defense literature by situating NAUB's potential role within contemporary debates on civil-military cooperation and performance management, thereby broadening the discourse beyond conventional counterinsurgency and operational analyses.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

Although the study advances conceptual understanding, it is subject to several limitations:

1. **Lack of Empirical Validation:** As a theoretical paper, the framework is not empirically tested within organizational settings, limiting its immediate application without future research.
2. **Generalization Constraints:** While grounded in literature, the framework may require adaptation to reflect unique institutional dynamics within specific military organizations, especially outside the Nigerian context.
3. **Rapid Technological Change:** Emerging defense technologies (e.g., AI and autonomous systems) may evolve faster than conceptual models can accommodate, necessitating ongoing updates to the framework.

4. **Scope Boundaries:** The study focuses on opportunities for knowledge partnership and performance management but does not explore potential risks, such as ethical challenges or national security sensitivities associated with academic-military collaboration.

5.4 Conclusion

This study developed a conceptually grounded framework for understanding how the Nigerian Army University Biu can contribute to military performance management and effectiveness through non-operational, knowledge-based engagement. Anchored in civil-military relations, professional military education, knowledge transfer, innovation diffusion, and performance management theories, the framework positions academic education, research, innovation, and advisory functions as institutional mechanisms for strengthening leadership development, organizational learning, and performance measurement capacity within the military. The framework is further supported by recent empirical evidence (2022–2025) demonstrating that structured knowledge processes, organizational learning culture, and sustained institutional partnerships are significant predictors of performance, innovation, and adaptability across higher education and public-sector contexts. While this study does not empirically test the proposed relationships, the convergence between theory and contemporary empirical findings provides strong conceptual justification for the framework's assumptions and pathways. By clearly delineating non-operational academic roles, the study reinforces appropriate civil-military boundaries while advancing understanding of how conventional universities can support military effectiveness in complex security environments. The framework contributes to knowledge by integrating interdisciplinary theory with recent



empirical insights and offers a policy-relevant model to guide structured academic-military knowledge partnerships. Future research may among others, empirically validate the framework across military or defense-related institutions to further advance evidence-based military performance management scholarship.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

Based on the discussion and limitations, future research could further pursue the following:

1. **Empirical Testing:** Conduct empirical case studies with defense institutions and universities to validate the conceptual framework and refine theoretical propositions.
2. **Comparative Analyses:** Investigate how different national contexts, particularly in Africa, Asia, and Europe operationalize academic-military knowledge partnerships within performance management systems.
3. **Technological Integration Studies:** Explore how emerging technologies (e.g., AI, data analytics, simulation modelling) can be integrated into PME and performance evaluation frameworks in a way that balances innovation with ethics, transparency, and governance.
4. **Risk and Ethics Research:** Examine ethical considerations, data security, and governance challenges associated with academic engagement in defense knowledge ecosystems.

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