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Theme:

THE NEED FOR SAFETY, SECURITY AND VIOLENCE FREE SCHOOL

2021

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EDITORIAL

The theme for this 2021 edition of *Education Today Journal*--- ***Insecurity in Nigerian Educational Institution*** is very timely because of the alarming rate of insecurity and the danger it poses on education in the country. The attack on educational institutions is appalling. Generally, on daily basis, we get to hear reports of banditry, cultism, rape, kidnappings, armed robberies, assassinations, ritual murders and lots more.

Education sector seems the most affected. It became famous in 2014 when Boko Haram (western education is a sin) attacked the Boys' Technical College in Yobe and killed more than 40 boys, and the abduction of over 200 Chibok schoolgirls. The abduction of Dapchi schoolgirls of 2018 had been followed by a trail of armed attacks, killings and abductions of schoolchildren and their handlers. According to UNICEF, more than 2,295 teachers have been killed, 19,000 displaced and 1,400 schools destroyed in the northeast Nigeria. One of the adverse effects is the fear and despondency created in parents and their wards. Since December 2020, the northwest zone had witnessed incessant attacks and abductions of schoolchildren and officials in Jangebe, Kankara, Kagara, Tegina, Kaduna and others across Katsina, Zamfara, Niger and Kaduna States respectively. The situation has worsened the number of out-of-school children and may potentially prevent the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 for 2030 as set by the United Nations.

Security can be said to be the state of being free from danger or threat. It is also the state of being protected from harm. To be secured means there is safety of lives and properties of people living within a geographical location. Security as related to education refers to and includes the critical and necessary environment in which effective teaching and learning can take place without any form of threats. It is necessary to put modalities in place to guard schoolchildren, teaching and non-teaching staff as well as the school environment against both internal and external threats. Activities that have made schools unsafe in Nigeria in recent times include kidnapping, outright murder, armed robbery, cult activities, attacks from bandits and terrorists, arson, etc.

The security situation of Nigeria has been called to question because of political unrest, incessant religious riots and violent activities of herdsmen and schools are often affected by these violent activities. Insecurity has really affected the education sector so much that as early as at the middle of 2016, over 600 teachers have been deliberately killed and a further 19,000 forced to flee their homes. More than 900 schools have been destroyed and 1500 more have been forced to close down. About one million children have been forced out of school as a result of these violent activities. According reports by UNICEF and UNESCO, the numbers of the atrocities have increased.

The Education Today Journal is an evidence-based scholastic journal of the Federal Ministry of Education. The goal of the journal is to promote education in Nigeria. This edition comprises of ten articles written by competent and experienced educationists, researchers, security and peacebuilding practitioners, and it promises to inform policy makers and practitioners not only in the education sectors but also across other development areas in Nigeria.

Among the journal's main recommendations is the need for schools, government and stakeholders to rethink security in schools and embrace the Safe School Initiative. They should cooperate more with the security agencies and community to make schools safe for learning.

It is hoped that you would have pleasurable and insightful reading.

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INSECURITY AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE QUALITY AND UTILITY VALUE OF GRADUATES OF NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

Stanley I. Uwakwe, Audu Y. Kadah
& Susan Audu-Bako

ABSTRACT

The threat posed by insecurity to Nigeria's unity and socio-economic development are real and extant.

Recently, insurgents, terrorists and criminal gangs seem to have developed a certain attraction to the education sector. Consequently, despite the global outrage and condemnation of the kidnap of 276 school girls in Chibok, Bornu state in 2014, attacks on schools across Nigeria continue to occur. From Dapchi to Kangara to Jangebe, school boys and girls have been whisked away by gunmen. Universities have not been spared as observed in the kidnap of 27 students from Greenfield University, Kaduna state on April 20th, 2021. This study examined insecurity and its effects on the quality and utility value of graduates of Nigerian universities. The survey research design was adopted for the study. Three hundred and fifty (350) respondents were randomly selected from relevant stakeholder groups and organisations in the education sector across the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Data obtained for the study were analysed using the descriptive statistics of frequency counts and simple percentage. The study revealed that the prevalence of insecurity has resulted in poor monitoring and evaluation of universities by regulatory agencies which are necessary for sustained quality content delivery to students.

Considering that quality university education equips graduates with fundamental skills and competencies necessary for utility in nation-building and societal development, the study recommends concerted efforts by all stakeholders to mitigate the negative effects of insecurity on the quality and utility value of graduates of Nigerian universities.

Key words: Education, Insecurity, University graduates

Introduction

Historically, matters of insecurity were topical issues within the Nigerian education sector particularly in university campuses. Such security challenges revolved largely around cult related killings and attacks, armed robbery and theft. In response to these issues, university administrators established campus security units to tackle these challenges. The recent upsurge in insecurity occasioned by insurgency, terrorism and banditry has introduced new dynamics to insecurity in the education sector in Nigeria.

The 2014 adoption of 276 school girls in Chibok, Bornu state, Nigeria (Lawal, 2018; Jones, 2021), which was the first contemporary kidnapping associated with insurgents and terrorists drew attention to the threats posed by insecurity to education in Nigeria. The global condemnation resulting from the adoption apparently made education-related kidnaps and attacks attractive to insurgents.

Recently, series of kidnapping and attacks have been carried out in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions across Nigeria particularly in the north east and north west region. These include: 110 Dapchi school pupils (Lawal, 2018; OLukoya, 2021); 300 school girls in Jangebe and 42 people, including 27 students in Kagara (Jones, 2021; Orinmo, 2021); 37 at Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation and 23 students at Greenfield University both in Kaduna State (Isenyo, 2021; Olayemi, 2021; Wuyo, 2021); amongst others.

The Federal Government's “Safe School Initiative” programme which was drawn up to provide teachers, parents and students with comprehensive information on safety skills; empower school communities with appropriate guidelines; provide schools with the information and skills required to conduct customised risk and threat audits of their establishments seem to have failed to end school kidnappings and attacks.

Thus, as proactive strategies to avoid attacks, several primary and secondary schools have been shut in

many states across the northern region of Nigeria (Iniobong, 2021; Shuaibu, 2021; Vanhuard, 2021). Universities are not left out as some have been shut down as precautionary measure against insecurity (Abraham, 2021; Premium Times, 2021).

Obviously, insecurity and its concomitant effects have negatively impacted on the education sector in Nigeria. However, there is need to empirically unravel its impacts on the quality of students in terms of skills acquired and knowledge gained in the course of schooling which are prerequisite for effective utility value of a graduate. Thus, the paper investigates the effects of insecurity on the quality and utility value of graduates of Nigerian universities. It examines how insecurity has affected graduands of Nigerian universities within the past one decade during which insecurity has increased in the country.

Purpose of the study

1. To investigate the prevalent insecurity issues in Nigerian universities
2. To examine the effects of insecurity on quality and utility value of graduates of Nigerian universities
3. To identify and proffer strategies for reducing the effects of insecurity on quality and utility value of graduates of Nigerian universities

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the prevalent insecurity issues in Nigerian universities?
2. What are the effects of insecurity on quality and utility value of graduates of Nigerian universities?
3. What are the strategies for reducing the effects of insecurity on quality and utility value of graduates of Nigerian universities?

Conceptual interpretations/literature review

Insecurity and quality/utility value of Nigerian university graduates

Nwapka (2015) avers that insecurity connotes a state of being subject to danger or injury, anxiety, fear, worry, uncertainty, unsureness. Best (2006) sees insecurity as a degenerated stage of conflict, threats to human security, intense violence characterized by fighting, death, injury, etc, occurs. To Olamosu (2000), insecurity is a state or condition in the life of a social unit, system, organization or society in which the existence of a problem assumes critical dimension to the extent that the survival or existence of the social system or structure is threatened. The point here is that insecurity is a threat to any society, community, country or organisation. However, in this paper, insecurity implies a situation of consistent attacks on schools and the educational sector in Nigeria which has gravely affected students, teachers, parents and the society at large.

Many definitions of quality in education exist, testifying to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. According to Bernard (1999) in all aspects of the school and its surrounding education community, the rights of students to survival, protection, development and participation are at the centre. This means that the focus is on learning which strengthens the capacities of students to act progressively on their own behalf through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, useful skills and appropriate attitudes; and which creates for students, and helps them create for themselves and others, places of safety, security and healthy interaction.

However, according to UNICEF (2000), quality education includes:

1. Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities;
2. Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities;
3. Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace;
4. Processes through which trained teachers use student-centred teaching approaches in well managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities;
5. Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.

The mandate given to Universities in Nigeria has been outlined in the National Policy of Education (2014).

The document contains the goals of educational programmes and the strategies to be adopted to achieve those goals. The part of the document that focuses on university education is Section 5. According to the document, the aim of university education in Nigeria is to:

1. contribute to national development through high level relevant, manpower training;
2. develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society;
3. develop the intellectual capacity of individual to understand and appreciate their level and external environment;
4. Acquire both physical and intellectual skills, this enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;
5. Promote and encourage scholarship and community service.

Furthermore, the document states that the university shall achieve these goals by intensifying and diversifying its programmes for the development of higher level manpower within the context of national needs and requirements of the country.

In response to public outcry over poor quality and utility value of Nigeria university graduates, the Federal government in 1999 abolished the Decree 19 of 1984 which banned the establishment of private universities in Nigeria. Consequently, that same year, three private universities (Babcock at Alison Remo in Ogun State; Madonna in Okija, Anambra State, and Igbinedion in Okada, Edo State) were established.

Despite the increase in the number of public and private universities in Nigeria, Onuoha and Ewuzie (2012) noted that employers of labour often complain about poor skills displayed by graduates of Nigerian Universities, which speak volumes about the quality and utility value of the degree certificates issues by these institutions. Okebukola (cited in Yusuf, Ajidagba, Agbonna & Olumorin, 2010) maintained that graduates of Nigerian faculties of education, for example, were inadequately prepared in both content and pedagogy, hence they could not teach well or at worst impact wrong knowledge which contribute negatively to the quality of students they produce. Otokunefor (2011) corroborated the position arguing that many University lecturers could not justify their degrees in the classrooms.

Studies carried out by Dabalem, Oni and Adekoya (2002) revealed that the quality of graduates produced in Nigerian Universities was low. Onyeneye (2006) concluded, after a review of relevant literatures, that the quality of Nigerian University graduates was declining in recent times against the demands of the 21st century society and expectations in the labour market. In symbolizing these anxieties in practical terms, the employers of labour have resorted to pre-job test and pre-job training programme to enable them upgrade the knowledge and skills of the graduates to meet the standards in the industry.

Egwu (2014), Nigerian former Minister of Education, averred that 80% of Nigerian University graduates were unemployable. Former President of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan (2014), noted that Nigerian graduates could not take up employment opportunities because they are lacking in basic skills and knowledge required by industry. Otokunefor (2011) observed that an executive with an employment agency decried the low quality of graduates who attend job interviews. The executive while expressing his disappointment highlighted poor oral and written English as part of the identifiable aspects of low quality displayed by contemporary graduates of Nigerian Universities.

The implication of this negative trend for the society is alarming. Studies by Ebuara, Udida, Ekpiken and Bassey (2009); Yusuf, Ajidagba, Agbonna and Olumorin (2010); Otokunefor (2011); and Aluede and Idogho (2012) have attributed various factors for the poor quality and utility value of Nigerian university graduates. These include: truncated/prolonged programme duration due to incessant strikes, illegal admission concessions, unqualified lecturers, defective institutional environment, inadequacy of study facilities, examination malpractices, waiver clause which allows failed students to graduates, brain-drain syndrome, deteriorated infrastructures, poor funding, political interference in University administration, regulative failure of National Universities Commission (NUC), irrelevant curricula, federal character and quota system syndrome, among others.

Beyond the factors identified above, it must be noted that insecurity is a threat to education as highlighted in the introductory section of the paper. The closure of schools due to insecurity, kidnap of students and attack on schools have multifaceted and multidimensional effects on both the students and the education sector. The effects have implications on the quality and utility value of graduates of Nigerian universities.

Methodology

This study was conducted using cross-sectional survey research design. This design is considered appropriate because the study involves the assessment of the opinions, attitudes, achievements, preferences and perceptions of a targeted population on the topic of interest to the researcher. This study adopted the quantitative survey research design and the location of the study respondents is Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

The size of the study population was 5037. This consisted of members of staff of National Universities Commission, National Youth Service Corp, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, Ministry of Education, Nigeria Employers Consultative Association and National Association of Nigerian Students. This study was conducted within Abuja metropolis.

Consequently, a sample size of 350 respondents was derived using Yaro-Yamen formula for determination of sample size. Stratified Quota random sampling technique was used to determine the sample from each stratum of the population. **The study's questionnaire was designed using a 6 Likert scale of: Strong Agree (SA) = 6; Agree (A) = 5; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 4; Disagree (D) = 3; Undecided (U) = 2; Don't know (DN) = 1 respectively.** Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to answer the research questions and 50% above is the baseline for the acceptance of result. 241 consisting **68.8% of the respondents were males while 109 making 31.2% were females**.

Presentation of findings

RQ 1: What are the prevalent insecurity issues in Nigerian universities?

Table 1: Respondents' opinion about the prevalent insecurity issues in Nigerian universities

	Description of items	SA	A	SD	D	U	DN
1	Kidnappings and adoptions by insurgents, bandits and criminal gangs	186 (53.1%)	76 (21.7%)	34 (9.7%)	26 (7.4%)	26 (7.4%)	2 (0.6%) %)
2	Killings and murder of students by insurgents and criminal groups	34 (9.7%)	198 (56.6%)	16 (4.6%)	56 (16%)	30 (8.6%)	16 (4.6%)

3	Cult related fights and killings	188 (53.7%)	116 (33.1%)	22 (6.3%)	14 (4%)	10 (2.9%)	-
4	Violent students protests	2 (0.6%)	-	104 (29.7 %)	156 (44.6 %)	88 (25.1%)	-
5	Armed robbery and theft	146 (41.7%)	20 (5.7%)	28 (8%)	-	156 (44.6%)	-

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

Table 1 shows that majority (53.1%) of the respondents identified kidnappings and adoptions by insurgents, bandits and criminal gangs as the major prevalent insecurity issue in Nigerian universities; others identified includes: killings and murder of students by insurgents and criminal groups, cult related fights and killings and armed robbery and theft.

RQ 2: What are the effects of insecurity on quality and utility value of graduates of Nigerian universities?

Table 2: Respondents' opinion about the effects of insecurity on quality and utility of graduates of Nigerian universities

utility of graduates of Nigerian universities

S/N	Description of Items	SA	A	SD	D	U	DN
6	Insecurity has made it difficult for regulatory agencies to move around for monitoring and evaluation of universities to ensure quality which will enhance utility value of graduates.	118 (33.7%)	182 (52%)	28 (8%)	10 (2.9%)	12 (3.4%)	-
7	Insecurity has resulted in government spending more on security and neglecting education sector funding thereby	34 (9.7%)	160 (45.7%)	154 (44%)	-	2 (0.6%)	-

	reducing the availability of critical equipment needed for quality delivery of educational content.						
8	Increased migration of brilliant academics out of Nigeria	144 (41.1%)	118 (33.7%)	42 (12%)	40 (11.4%)	6 (1.7%)	-
9	Insecurity has resulted in use of virtual learning which does not allow for one -on-one teaching-learning process necessary for better understanding relevant for improved student quality and utility	18 (5.1%)	70 (20%)	236 (67.4%)	26 (7.4%)	-	-
10	Insecurity has created fear and apathy as well as discouraged research by students which has potential of improving their quality and utility.	-	310 (88.6%)	2 (0.6%)	4 (1.1%)	34 (9.7%)	

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

Table 2 shows that 52% of the respondents indicated that insecurity has made it difficult for regulatory agencies to move around for monitoring and evaluation of universities to ensure quality which will enhance utility value of graduates, also 45.7% of the respondents agreed that insecurity has resulted in government spending more on security and neglecting education sector funding thereby reducing the availability of critical equipment needed for quality delivery of educational content, 41.1% of the respondents averred that insecurity has resulted in increased migration of brilliant academics out of Nigeria. Conversely, 67.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed that insecurity has resulted in use of virtual learning which does not allow for one-on-one teaching-learning process necessary for better understanding relevant for improved student quality and utility just as 88.6% of respondents opined that insecurity has created fear and apathy as well as discouraged research by students which has potential of improving their quality and utility.

RQ 3: What are the strategies for reducing the effects of insecurity on quality and utility value of graduates of Nigerian universities?

This research question was answered by organising the suggestions and recommendations of the study respondents as outlined in items 11-15. The suggestions were categorised into frequencies and percentages as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents' opinions on strategies for reducing the effects of insecurity on quality and utility value of graduates of Nigerian universities

S/N	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
11	Increased security presence around univers ities to curtail adoption and kidnappings	321/350	91.7
12	University regulatory agencies should develop innovative strategies such as use of technology for monitoring and evaluation in order to reduce physical visits to these universities.	280/350	80
13	Regulatory agencies should ensure that universities using virtual learning platforms comply with global best practices to enable quality of contents been delivered to students	219/350	62.5
14	Government should make fund available for the purchase of relev ant equipment that will enhance the quality of university graduates.	162/350	46.2
15	Government should include the teaching of security awareness related courses to students in order for them to be able to protect themselves against kidnappers	117/350	33.4

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

Table 3 above outlines the suggestions proffered by respondents on strategies for reducing the effects of insecurity on quality and utility value of graduates of Nigerian universities. Based on the findings, it can be deduced that 91.7% of the respondents suggested that security presence around universities should be increased to curtail adoption and kidnappings, 80% of the respondents said University regulatory agencies should develop innovative strategies such as use of technology for monitoring and evaluation in order to reduce physical visits to these universities, 62.5% of the respondents asserted that regulatory agencies should ensure that universities using virtual learning platforms comply with global best practices to enable quality of contents been delivered to students. Similarly, 46.2% of the respondents opined that government should make fund available for the purchase of relevant equipment that will enhance the quality of university graduates, while 33.4% of the respondents suggested that government should include the teaching of security awareness related courses to students in order for them to be able to protect themselves against kidnappers.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Nigeria today is passing through a lot of changes in virtually every field of her citizens' endeavor. These changes are mainly in the areas of socio-economic development. Consequently, Nigeria finds herself in an era of business and industrial changes involving new methods and techniques. There is an increased search for skilled workers and specialists in various fields. University education has a role to play with regards to the problem of unemployment in the country. There is a declining job market for university graduates particularly those that lack skills or ability to utilize the knowledge acquired from the university. Education is the major agency for both personal and national socio-economic development; hence investment in human capital development is critical to growth, development and productivity of any nation. University education, according to UNESCO, is a platform through which human beings are equipped with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in order to position them to derive maximum benefits from the society, lead fulfilling lives, and contribute to the wellbeing of the community in which they are members. Considering that universities are fundamental in nation-building and societal development, the menace and threat posed by insecurity to the education sector in Nigeria cannot be underestimated. Therefore, concerted efforts must be made by all stakeholders to mitigate the negative effects of insecurity on the quality and utility value of graduates of Nigerian universities. Also, the Federal Ministry of Education and National Universities Commission should deploy the use of technology in monitoring and evaluation of universities particularly those in conflict/kidnap prone areas.

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About the Authors

Stanley I. Uwakwe

Stanley I. Uwakwe is a faculty member at the department of social sciences and humanities, Federal Polytechnic, Idah, Kogi State and holds a PhD in Peace, Security and Humanitarian Studies, from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He has extensive experience in research and field data collection on security, counter-terrorism, conflict management, peacebuilding, early warning and community resilience. Stanley was the team lead on a recent study on Political Economy Analysis of Community Resilience Against Violent Extremism in Northeast (Adamawa, Bornu and Yobe states) Nigeria funded by USAID; He served as team member on social sustainability inclusion study in Cameroon funded by the World Bank in 2020/21. Stanley belongs to several professional and academic societies. He has written several reports, policy briefs and published widely in books, journals and periodicals. He can be contacted via uwakweike@gmail.com

Susan O. Audu-Bako

Susan O. Audu-Bako is a research fellow at the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. She is the desk officer on gender based violence at IPCR. She holds a Master's degree in gender, peace and security from Nassarawa state university, Keffi. Susan has over 10 years **professional and technical expertise on gender based violence, conflict, child protection, peace and security related issues in Nigeria, West Africa and beyond. She is a member of several groups such as** National Working Committee on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Nigeria, SGBV Sub-Sector Working Group in the North East and Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (ICMC). She has written several articles on gender, peace and security related issues. Email: susanaudubako@gmail.com

Kadah Yunusa

Kadah Yunusa holds a Master's degree in Educational Measurement and Evaluation from the Faculty of Education, Nassarawa state university, Keffi where is currently enrolled for a Doctorate Degree. He is a deputy director in Weight and Measures Department, Federal Ministry of Trade and Investment, Abuja. Kadah also holds a postgraduate diploma of the National Teachers Institute. He has attended several workshops and seminars where he presented papers on security and education. His PhD Thesis is on impacts of insecurity on the education sector in Nigeria. Mr. Kadah can be contacted on: yunusakadah4@gmail.co

Understanding the Contemporary Drivers of Violent Attacks on Educational Institutions in Northern Nigeria

Olalekan A. Babatunde [1]

Abstract

Educational institutions seem the most impacted by the rising violent attacks in northern Nigeria going by the recurring killings and abductions of schoolchildren (students and pupils), teachers and their families. The attacks have led to disruption of teaching and learning activities and school calendars; including stoppage of schooling and destruction of schools. Bandits, a loose word for kidnappers, armed robbers and cattle rustlers, in the northwest Nigeria had within a space of three months (December 2020 – March 2021) kidnapped over 700 students. Similarly, about 70 professors of the University of Maiduguri have lost their lives to the insurgency. Fear and despondency are some of the feelings already making some learners decide not to go to school again. Unfortunately, the attacks retard whatever has been achieved in the Nigeria's educationally disadvantaged region. What has driven the current widespread attacks on education needs to be studied and understood. Drawing data from different media reports, desk research and as a teacher, the study uncovers a wide range of remote and proximate factors that made educational institutions an inescapable target of terrorist and bandit violence in the region. Besides ideological campaigns against western education and civilization, attacking schools as a soft target remains the criminals' most formidable ransom strategy of negotiation with the government. Hence, to salvage education and secure the future of the younger generation through the promotion of the SGD (4), it is important for government to declare emergency in education and ramp up Safe the School Initiatives in the whole northern Nigeria. Chances of a lasting security in schools become even more remote if the government and security agencies reneged on their respective political and institutional obligations to defend and protect the citizens and infrastructure.

[1] Babatunde, PhD, is a fellow of the Nigeria's Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Abuja.

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Introduction

Education is under serious attack in northern Nigeria. From the Islamist terrorist groups in the northeast region to the banditry in the northwest region, educational institutions have become the primary target of violent attacks and abductions. Schools have replaced security installations, police stations, churches, mosques, banks and beer parlours as prime targets for various reasons. As at 14 March 2021, 800 schoolchildren have been abducted in four northern states of Katsina, Niger, Zamfara and Kaduna since December 2020 (Vanguard, 14 March, 2021).

Raiding of schools have left many students and teachers killed and abducted while schools destroyed including disruption to school calendar and abandonment of education by learners. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2021), no less than 5,330,631 students have had their education disrupted due to attacks on schools and kidnapping of students in the region. The infamous abduction of 276 Chibok schoolgirls in 2014 in Borno State by Boko Haram was the height of the notoriety.

The most notorious on-going attacks on schools in the north are being perpetrated by armed bandits in the north-western states of Zamfara, Katsina, and Kaduna, and Niger State in the north-central zone of the country. The raids on schools by different groups of bandits have been ramped up since the eruption of farmer-herder crises in the region in 2014. Within a space of three months (December 2020 and February 2021), 723 secondary students were kidnapped and several millions of naira demanded as ransom for their release.

The over a decade-old Boko Haram (meaning western education is a sin) insurgency has led to killing, kidnap and burning of schools in Borno and Yobe States, while banditry unleashed terror in Kankara, Jangebe and Kagara in Katsina and Zamfara States respectively. The factors triggering this unpleasant phenomenon in the 21st century need to be understood in order to adequately respond to the problem. If not, it portends a great danger that will undermine the realization of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 4) in Nigerian education sector.

More so, the study became necessary as a result of the conspiracy theories about the reasons fueling violent attacks on educational institutions in the region. For instance, according to Adamu Usman (2021), "the reason for the abduction [school children] goes beyond ransom-taking. It is deliberately and carefully arranged or carried out to discourage learning of western education in the northern Nigeria as being championed by the dreaded Boko Haram members." Likewise, the narratives on the school attack have mostly centred on the effect or consequence rather than what fuelled it.

Hence, it is important to uncover the true driving force behind the attacks in order to put the unwholesome development into perspective. The goal of the study is to restore normalcy in the northern Nigeria's education sector. Once peace and harmony returned back to the sector, teaching and learning can flourish, and education development will be promoted in the region that is already disadvantaged educationally.

Hence, drawing qualitative and quantitative data from desk reviews, media reports (particularly the Vanguard newspaper because of its up-to-date and detailed reports on education and security issues), and experiential knowledge of the researcher, the study attempted answers to the following questions: What was the nature of the on-going violent attacks on educational institutions in northern Nigeria? What are the contemporary drivers of these violent attacks? What risks and threats could these violent attacks portend to the region and Nigeria in general? How can these drivers of violence be mitigated?

Nature and Incidents of the Attacks

The violent attacks confronting educational institutions since the outbreak of Boko Haram in 2009 in the northeast have spread to the northwest and north-central zones of the country. Initially started with burning of schools, killing of teachers and abducting school children (particularly mass abduction of female students) has focused exclusively on mass abduction of schoolchildren and staff. Besides Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States in the northeast, Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger States have recorded raids by bandits in the northwest and north-central zones respectively. Many groups have joined Boko Haram to attack schools. They included Boko Haram's ssplinter-faction, the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), and others who are mostly bandit groups with no known name and

leader. Boko Haram had earlier claimed the Kankara schoolboys' abduction in Katsina State in a viral video. From some media reports on kidnapping nationwide, there are claims of cases where victims were sold to a third party.

The assaults usually came in forms of surprise attacks in the night or early morning hours pretending to be military, waking school children and staff up from their sleep and marching them into the bush en masse. The invasion could be ruthless. Any students that resisted or attempted to escape were killed. For instance, the armed men shot and killed one student when they kidnapped 42 schoolboys including three staff and 12 members of their families at Government Science College, Kagara in Niger State on February 2021 (Aljazeera, 2021). A public primary school in Rema near Birnin Gwari was also invaded and three teachers kidnapped as the pupils managed to escape. In early March in Kaduna, troops foiled another attack by gunmen on Turkish International School.

Fire has also been set on schools. According to the Human Rights Watch (2012), more than a dozen schools has been set on fire by Boko Haram in and around Maiduguri. For example, Sunshine Stars Secondary School and Success Secondary School were set ablaze between February and March 2012.

The manifestation of the attacks since banditry began around 2016 in the northwest has been around sudden attack and kidnapping of large number of schoolchildren. The armed groups generally involved in this type of attack were bandits who are regarded as criminals. They arrive in schools in scores mostly at night and dressed in military uniforms. While some schoolchildren were forced into vehicles, others were herded away. Once their victims were in their custody or hideouts, they demanded for ransom from the authorities.

Once they abduct their victims en masse, they show the video a few days afterwards where the schoolchildren either cream or look haggard with the bandits wielding guns around them or flogging them. In the case of Boko Haram, the videos of the Chiboks girls were shown where victims pleaded to the government for their release. The scenarios arose public sympathies and outcries. After what often appears like ransom has been paid or some sort of negotiation has taken place, the bandits released the students and officials who will be immediately taken to the state government house or facility for presentation to the governor and the media. Most of the freed schoolchildren often looked exhausted and felt empty.

Contemporary Drivers of the Violent Attacks

Most of the factors presently driving terrorist and banditry attacks against schools in northern Nigeria can be linked to the past. Though factors such as poverty, unemployment, ignorance, marginalization and porous borders in which challenges of weak governance, nepotism and corruption have caused are the underlying enablers, the real drivers of these attacks are far beyond the past challenges.

Keen observation and media monitoring of the recent trend in Nigeria indicates kidnapping for ransom by armed groups was the major driver of attacks against educational institutions in the region. For example, the Niger Delta militants who adopted kidnapping as early as the late 1990s by abducting oil workers (mostly expatriates) as a strategy in driving home their demands and agitation for better environmental and living conditions in which oil pollution has caused the region. It actual set a precedent for kidnapping in the country.

Criminal groups in other parts of the country that had access to arms and ammunition later copied the model primarily for selfish gains. Kidnapping for ransom later became the order of the day in the southeast and southwest regions of the country. Generally regarded as lucrative, kidnapped victim pays between $20 and $200,000 for their freedom. Most of the targets or victims were passengers and schoolchildren in Lagos State. Up to the time of writing this report, kidnapping or abduction mainly perpetrated by herdsmen was still going on particularly in the southwest Nigeria.

Though, as a terrorist strategy, Boko Haram had adopted kidnapping to collect ransoms from government and international organizations. The abduction of the Chibok in 2014 and Dapchi in 2018 schoolgirls were famous in this regard. The authorities were reported to have paid large sum of money to Bok Haram for the release of some of these girls. Also, for instance, according to Babatunde (2018), ransom was collected from the abduction of Western hostages such as the seven French nationals and an American in Cameroon in 2013 (although France and Cameroon denied paying ransom for the release of the Moulin-Fournier family).

The kidnapping later spread to some parts of the northern Nigeria specifically from 2014. The northcentral region, particular Kogi State became the epicentre. Most of the perpetrators of the crime were herdsmen and their collaborators in the township. The menace to the nation became so rife that the Inspector General of Police, Ibrahim Idris, while briefing State House correspondents after a close door meeting with President Muhammadu Buhari at the Presidential Villa, said his command had arrested about 3,000 suspected kidnappers nationwide (PMnewsnigeria, 2017).

Closely related to the above is the large sum of money reportedly paid to the criminal gangs by the authorities and proprietorships of this crime when it involved schoolchildren and their teachers. As earlier mentioned, it seemed to attract public outcry and sympathy when it involved schoolchildren. The 2014 kidnap of Chibok trended globally in the international media and received worldwide support. Mitchelle Obama, wife of Barack Obama, the US President and notable figures condemned the act and joined the #BringBackOurGirls. Kidnapping schoolchildren was an attractive endeavour for the criminals.

One could assert that the incessant attacks on educational facilities like schools (hostels, classrooms and staff quarters) in Kaduna, Niger, Zamfara and Katsina States between 2019 and March 2021 were fuelled by this motive. The government often refuted such claim. But going by the statement of Governor Nasir Ahmed el-Rufai of Kaduna State that he would neither close down schools nor negotiate let alone pay any ransom for the kidnap of the 39 students of the Federal College of Forestry Mechanization on the outskirts of Kaduna, and the narratives that followed the ransom controversy in the media, one could suggest that some authorities paid ransom for the release of schoolchildren.

Another driving force behind the attacks on educational institutions in northern Nigeria was that the kidnap proceeds were used to fuel Boko Haram insurgency whose basic ideology is opposition to western education. More so, the group opposes western education. The Chairman of the Nigeria Governors Forum and governor of Ekiti State, Dr. Kayode Fayemi also disclosed this view while fielding questions from State House correspondents. According to Fayemi:

There is a direct correlation, I've said this to you before, between insurgency in the northeast, and what we're seeing manifesting itself as banditry in the northwest, or kidnapping in the southwest. Some of the people involved in these are also the ones responsible for insurgency…They are using resources they make from kidnapping for the activities that they're conducting in the northeast.

Similarly, targeting schools by bandits could not have been possible if the borders were not porous and gave way to arms proliferation in the country. Most of these armed groups brandishing all sorts of arms from AK47 rifles to rocket-propelled grenades. It was a common narrative among some officials that some of these bandits are not Nigerians, and yet they crossed the borders into the country. Thus, cross-border banditry fuelled the current attacks on educational institutions in the region. Nevertheless, the study is of the opinion that the weak borders would continue to be a transit for transnational criminals if more is done to strengthen its security.

Risks and Threats to the Region

It was the National President of the Parent-Teacher Association of Nigeria, Alhaji Haruna Danjuma, while condemning the activities of bandits, kidnappers and terrorists attacking schools, and advising the authorities on steps to take, had lamented about the ugly development to the educational institutions. According to Danjuma, "since the kidnap of Chibok girls, to Dapci to Katsina, the incidence in Niger State and now in Kaduna, this security challenge has caused a serious setback to education in the North and the country at large" (Vanguard, 2021).

The contemporary violence against educational institutions in the northern region and Nigeria in general has not occurred without its risks and threats. First, education was affected. For example, governors of Kano and Yobe States closed boarding facilities while all schools were closed in Zamfara and Niger States once bandits kidnapped schoolchildren. In Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States have had dozens of schools shut due to the Boko Haram insurgency.

The development hindered teaching and learning as compared to their colleagues in other Nigerian regions. According to UNICEF, there is an existing net attendance of only 53% in primary schools in

northern Nigeria (BBC, 2 March 2021). Its level for girls is much lower due to socio-cultural norms and practices that discourage attendance in formal education. Unfortunately, also, pupils and students who were expected to sit for terminal and national examinations have had their studies interrupted by criminals. It portends a huge danger to the education sector.

The northern Nigeria is already educationally disadvantaged compared to southern region. Many reports have it that the north has the highest number of out-of-school children in the country (Vanguard, 2021). The disruption brought by the 11-year old Boko Haram insurgency and the current challenges of banditry on schools do not augur well for education development of the region. There have been some pupils who said they were not going back to school, and parents would vowed not to allow their wards to resume or attend school again. Boarding schools have already been affected as some states in the region have shut them down and asked students to register with day schools within their communities. This resolve threatens the region's educational development and could be another source of violence in the future.

The target on schools has also affected the psychosocial behaviour of the schoolchildren. Schoolchildren living in fear and despondency cannot concentrate on learning. Many would be undergoing some sort of trauma in such a way that if not professionally taken care of, could adversely affect the kidnapped victims in the future. There are reports that some of the returned Chibok girls were raped or taken as wives, and a few came back with babies that they borne for the insurgents. What that means is that there would be children who would not know or meet their fathers and relations. Peers could also taunt such children in the school and community. The situation threatened the moral fabrics of the society.

The attacks on educational institutions and abduction of schoolchildren also pose some danger to the rest of the country. According to the Middle Belt Forum, kidnaping of schoolchildren would destroy Nigeria because its human capital development is endangered (Vanguard, 18 March, 2021). Meanwhile, in southwest Nigeria, particularly Oyo State has brazened up to ward off similar attack as a result of the armed attacks in the north. The governor of the state, Seyi Makinde, had set up a task force in that regard. In his words, “we have been hearing about the kidnapping of schoolchildren and their teachers and we do not want that to happen in Oyo State. So, we are seeking every support that we can get.” One important thing that can be observed in the trends of violence in Nigeria is that once it developed in one region, such violence escalates to other regions in a matter of time, scope and intensity. The snowball effect is real. As earlier indicated above, the kidnap that started in the Niger Delta as a form of agitation and later criminal business is an example.

Mitigating Drivers of the Violence

As Usman Abdulllahi Koli (2021) succinctly put it, school environment is a place where pupils should be safe. The government has the primary responsibility to protect lives and property. The statement made by the Minister of State for Education, Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba when he was addressing some parents that “we can't secure all schools” will not go down well with both parents and pupils. The government and education stakeholders have the duty to step up their constitutional obligations to secure schools and other educational assets either in Kankara, Kagara, Jangebe, Birni Gwari, Kaduna or any part of the country. The community where the schools are situated and the National Parent-Teacher Association of Nigeria should work closely with the government to bolster security in schools.

The Safe School Initiative that was launched after the Chibok girls were abducted should be extended to the northwest and strengthened to provide security in schools. That initiative is relevant to checkmate the contemporary drivers of violent attacks on educational institutions through building a fence round the schools. But that could be complimented with providing security men such as hunters and vigilante, and provide resources around educational institutions like regular electricity and technology. When the security outfits are equipped with sophisticated weapons and technology they would be able to ward off bandits who are brandishing AK47 rifles and other arms.

Similarly, the level of infrastructure of the invaded schools as shown in the media was deplorable. Classrooms, hostels and staff quarters were awfully looking. They have been neglected for too long and such could also explain why it was easier for bandits

to attack them. All educational facilities should be innovated and wear new look. Students and teachers deserve better if Nigeria is to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4).

Kidnaping and other crimes should be made non-lucrative by the government and the society at large. The existing legal frameworks on criminalities and terrorism should be strengthened where there are weaknesses to prosecute arrested kidnappers or insurgents. Government can revisit the capital punishment for convicted perpetrators of this crime. Once kidnapping is not lucrative, there would be drastic reduction on not only on educational institutions but also in other sectors.

Also related to the above is the fact that payment of ransom and rewarding them with largesse such as cars and houses as Governor Bello Matawalle of Zamfara State has done to repentant bandits should stop. Once abductors do not get paid for release of hostages or rewarded for repentance, they will find the crime non-lucrative and unrewarding. This study lends its support to the President Buhari's dissuasion in his tweet that "state governments must review their policy of rewarding bandits with money and vehicles. Such a policy has the potential to backfire with disastrous consequences. States and Local Governments must also play their part by being proactive in improving security in & around schools" (BBC, 2 March 2021).

Generally, Nigeria's borders must be bolstered to promote national security. Technology and capacity building programmes for the border officials should be ramped up for efficient and effective monitoring of cross-border activities and border communities. Similarly, as a group of northern youth advised recently, the government should declare a state of emergency in education to enable it comprehensively address the menace.

Sponsors of the violence should be identified and brought to book. The President Buhari's order to the security forces to identify and "take out" the sponsors of the dastardly act is commendable. The study is of the opinion that if the order is carried out, it will help in mitigating violent attacks on educational institutions. As Governor Makinde of Oyo State said, his administration;

...is not only working round the clock to keep the students safe but it is not leaving any stone unturned in making sure that their parents, their families, and other residents of the state are able to sleep with their two eyes closed at all times.

Policy Recommendations

The Nigerian education sector has been confronted with a wide range of challenges such as poor funding, labour strikes, infrastructure decay and recently, kidnapping. Policymakers and practitioners must adhere to the education policy that says primary education is compulsory and free. Since education is the right of every child, government should ensure full return of all children to school.

As the future leaders of Nigeria, schoolchildren and generally Nigerian youth deserve quality and safe education anywhere in the country. Therefore, it is incumbent on government to strengthen the Safe School Initiative that was supported by international community to respond to the incessant attacks of educational institutions and abductions of schoolchildren. New policies should address the easy way for kidnappers, bandits, terrorists and other armed groups to access the educational premises. States should explore new ways to protect educational premises through for example, some level of early-warning mechanisms and other state-of-the-art technology that can transmit signals from one part of educational premises to security outposts.

Lastly, the draft National Peace Policy developed by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, the government agency saddled with promoting peacebuilding and conflict management, should be passed into law. Once that is done, it promises to mitigate the underlying drivers of violence in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The mere fact of armed groups attacking educational institutions to abduct schoolchildren and teachers underlines the deterioration of security in northern Nigeria. There is a huge threat that it may soon spread to southern part of the country if the authorities and educational stakeholders did not take urgent actions. The future of the country in terms of human capital development would be the victim if the corrective actions were not taken to strengthen security in educational institutions in the north. Therefore, the study concludes that, to build safe and secure educational institutions in northern Nigeria,

government and stakeholders must, among others, scale up the Safe School Initiative. In addition, the security agencies must work in tandem with the national security goals of the country.

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About the Author

Olalekan A. Babatunde, PhD, is a fellow, peacebuilding and evidence practitioner at the Nigeria's Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution. He holds a PhD in History from the University of Zululand, South Africa. His research interests include youth and violent extremism, migration and impact evaluation. He also supervises research students of the National Open University of Nigeria. His writings have appeared in *Peace Review, Nova Science Publishers, Journal of Transdisciplinary Peace Praxis, and International Journal of Development Research,* among others.

SCHOOL KIDNAPPING: EXAMINING ITS THREAT TO EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

By
Nneka Cynthia Ohaeri and Grace Ugomma Okoro [2]

Abstract

This paper examines the concept of school kidnapping and its implication on education. Educational institutions are now the target of both terrorists and bandits, since the Chibok attack of 2014, where the Boko Haram terrorists kidnapped over 200 girls. The kidnap keeps increasing by the day, as the perpetrators become more daring. Several cases of school kidnapping have been recorded from 2014 till date. This includes the Chibok girls attack, which garnered international attention, then the Dapchi girls who were kidnapped in 2018 in Yobe State. This menace has gradually moved from the Northeast Nigeria to the Northwest Nigeria where the attack of 344 boys was recorded in Kankara on 11th December 2020, and the 80 Islamiyah students who were kidnapped in Mahuta, both in Katsina State. Recently, the North central have joined in this ugly statistics with the attack on Government Science College in Kagara, Niger State. Tertiary institutions have also not been spared, recording their own case of school kidnapping with the attack on Federal College of Forestry Mechanization, Mando, Kaduna State where 39 students are currently still missing. From the finding of this study, the educational implication of school kidnapping includes but not limited to fear, violation of the Child's Right Act, shortage of personnel, cost implication, psychological trauma, and apathy to schooling. This paper recommends amongst others that the safe school initiative should be taken serious, incentives should be given to the affected communities to continue schooling and psychological intervention should be made available to them.

Introduction

In Nigeria today, insecurity has become the most talked about situation. Hardly a day goes by without news of violence Nigeria. Insecurity in Nigeria has taken different forms and tactics since its inception. From expatriates kidnapping and bombing of oil pipelines by the Niger-Delta militants, to the bombing of Boko Haram (meaning western education is forbidden), the clash between herdsmen and farmers and the recent activities of bandits in some northern states. No sector of the economy has been spared. The worst hit and the target of the recent acts of insecurity is the education sector. Many teachers and students have been killed, schools and homes have been destroyed, leaving many displaced or on the run for their lives.

School Kidnapping

Many in different ways have defined kidnapping. For instance, Inyang and Abraham (2013) defined it as the forcible seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person against his or her will. In another definition, Uzorma and Nwanegbo-Ben (2014) defined kidnapping as the act of seizing and detaining or carrying away a person by unlawful force or by fraud and often with a demand for ransom. Kidnapping is always against the will of the individual being taken away. This is captured by the definition of Fage and Alabi (2017) who described kidnapping as a forceful or fraudulent abduction of an individual or a group of individuals for reasons ranging from economic, political and religious to self-determination. There is always a motive for kidnapping. It can be financial reasons or even just to make a statement or sometimes to recruit more members to embrace the kidnappers' ideology, just as in the case of Boko Haram. Most of the children kidnapped by Boko Haram group have been said to have forcefully converted to their belief or even be used as suicide bombers.

School kidnapping is the planned abduction of school children in large numbers. School kidnapping is a recent form of kidnapping. Kidnapping, as a social vice can be dated as far back as 1874, when kids of the rich families were abducted for ransom while asleep (Tnazelli, 2006). In fact, the word, kidnapping, is derived from kid (infant) and nap (sleep). The recent kidnapping of school children is

new to Nigeria. In times past, children were kidnapped by criminals for ransom to be paid by their parents or guardians or for ritual or slavery purposes but in the case of school kidnapping, the parents are not usually contacted. The perpetrators of this school kidnapping seem not to be interested in individual ransom but rather the government who is always under pressure to seek the release of the abducted students.

Incidents of School Kidnapping in Nigeria

Since the inception of Boko Haram terrorist group in 2009, several cases of school kidnapping have been reported. As if that was not enough, bandits have recently made schools their target. Teachers are not also spared in these attacks. A recent report of UNICEF stated that over 2,295 teachers have been killed and 19,000 displaced and 1,400 schools destroyed with majority unable to resume school due to incessant violence especially in the northeast part of Nigeria.

The first case of school kidnapping was recorded on the 15th of April 2014, where the Boko Haram terrorist group in Chibok, Bornu state abducted 270 female secondary school students. The kidnap was neither the first nor the last incident where Boko Haram took groups of people but it was certainly the first time such numbers of school children were kidnapped. The event was greeted by international outcry against the act, and the 'bring back our girls' campaign' was flagged off.

The school where the kidnapping occurred, had previously been closed down due to insecurity, but students were called back to take their final exams in physics (Perkins 2014, April 23) and 300 female students were abducted on that day, but about 50 escaped by jumping off the truck that was conveying them to the forest. The abduction was intended to be revenge against the federal government for alleged family members and wives of the Boko Haram group leaders held in detention. It also served as punishment to the girls for attending western education schools. (Atabo, 2019). Majority of the girls who were Christians were forced to convert to Islam and also forced into marriage with Boko Haram members (LaFranchi 2014, May 5). After many back and forth effort from the federal government, 82 Chibok school girls were released, all though some of them had earlier escaped. (Adamu 2017).

Less than a year after the release of the 82 Chibok schoolgirls, the Boko Haram terrorist group attacked another school in Dapchi, Yobe State. On the 18th of February, 2018, one hundred and ten (110) school girls were kidnapped from Government Girls' Secondary School Dapchi, Yobe State. Just like the Bring Back Our Girls campaign, a new social media campaign tagged 'Dapchi Girls' was launched. The government received pressure from both national and international organizations which made them to enter into negotiations with Boko Haram. All the girls were later released except five of them who suffocated while being transported by their kidnapers and Leah Shaibu who refused to convert to Islam ('The Guardian', 2018).

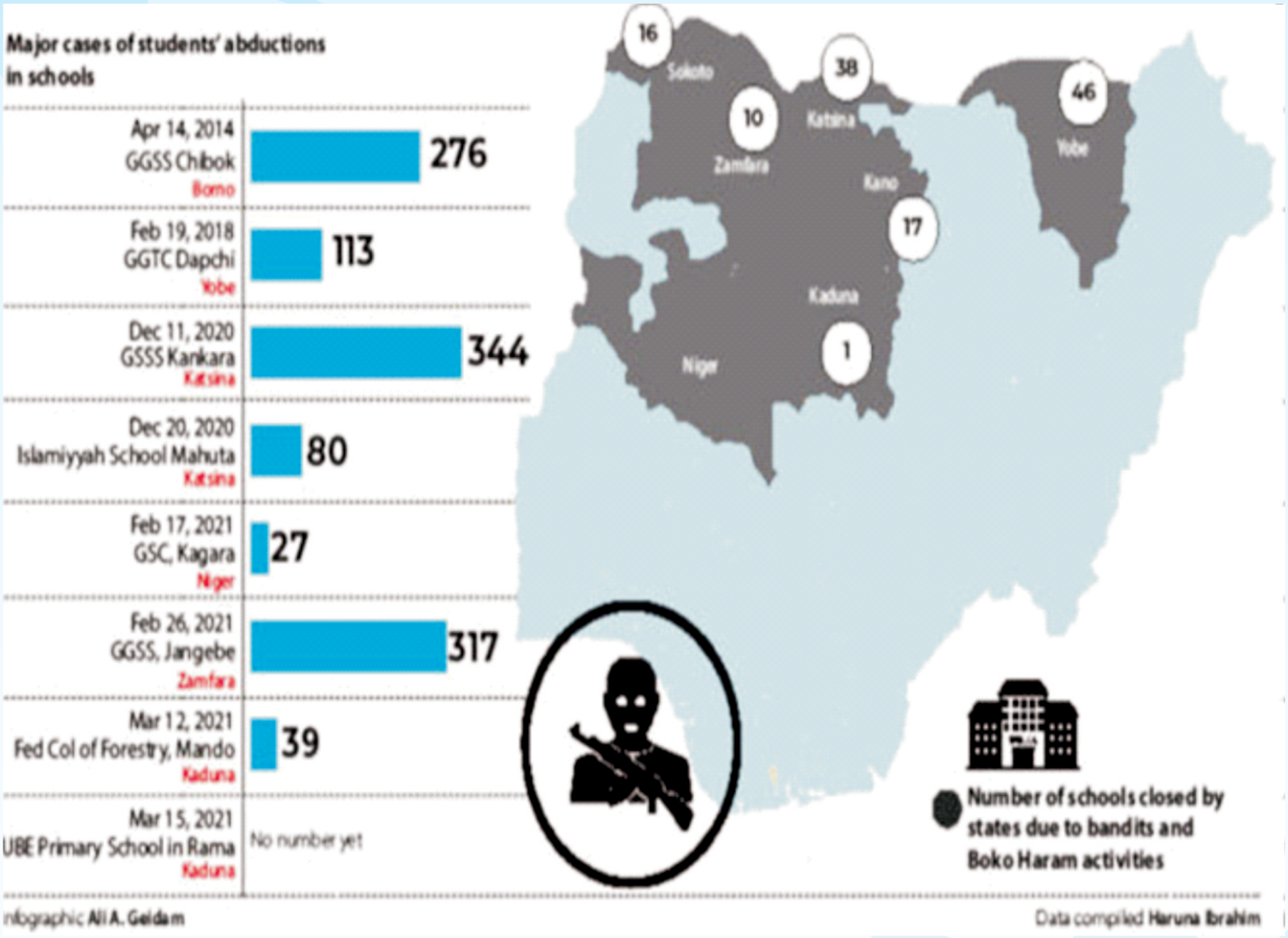
Another school kidnapping happened on the 11th of December, 2020, where over three hundred and forty-four (344) boys from Government Science Secondary School Kankara, Katsina State were abducted by gunmen on motorcycles. In a video released, Book Haram claimed responsibility of this attack. The Nigerian Military later rescued the boys.

On 20th December, 2020, just few weeks after the Kankara incident, yet another group of students were attacked. The students were students of an Islamic school (Islamiyah) in Mahutu, Funtua, Katsina state. The kidnapers were said to be returning from a Maulud procession in a neighbouring village. The students were later released after spending six days in their abductors' den.

Another incident of school kidnapping occurred on the 17th February 2021, when 27 school pupils were abducted at the Government Science Collage Kagara, Niger State. Three members of the school's staff and twelve relative of theirs were also victims of the kidnap. After spending 10 days in abduction, the 42 persons kidnapped were freed. Immediately after the release of the Kagara students, on the 26th of February, the bandits struck again, this time kidnapping nearly 300 girls from a boarding school in Zamfara. The girls were later released after some days by their abductors.

Tertiary institutions were not spared in this attacks, on the 12th of March, 2021, 39 students from

the Federal College of Forestry Mechanization, Mando, Kaduna State became another victim. The number would have been more but the Nigerian Army was able to rescue 180 people while 39 of the students remain missing. As at the time of this study, the most recent incident of school kidnapping was the abduction of students and teachers from Universal Basic Education (UBE) Primary School Rama, a village in Birnin Gwari LGA of Kaduna State. This occurred on the 15th of March 2021, few weeks after the Mando incident. The numbers of teachers and students kidnapped have not been ascertained.



Educational Implication of School Kidnapping

School kidnapping has had a very devastating effect on education. According to BBC report, more than 20 schools have been shut down in Yobe and Kano states. Bornu and Niger states are also not left out. This development has adversely affected the school calendar, which had already been disrupted by the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Fear: Students, teachers, and all other stakeholders have been gripped with fear. Some students interviewed by BBC after the Dapchi kidnap confided with the interviewer that even with security in the school, they will be too scared to return back to school. Children cannot learn in fear and even the teachers will be teaching while looking over their shoulders. Parents are always anxious when their children go to school, wondering the kind of news they will receive (UN, 1996). The threats, reduction in freedom of movement and general feeling of being unsecured have the effects of preventing access to education and diminishing the quality of the learning experience (O'Mallay, 2011).

Violation of the Child's Right Act: Schoolchildren in the Northeast Nigeria have been at the mercy of violence attack for a long time now. Attacking school is a violation of children's right. When schools are attacked, educational buildings and other educational facilities are damages as well. This disrupts learning activities, which is the right of

the child. The Child's Right Act, 2003 (Child Rights Act 2003), in section 15 guarantees the child's right to free, compulsory and universal basic education, which the government has a duty to provide. School kidnapping is a serious violation of the child's right to education, because it targets schools thereby forcing them to close down and depriving much access to education.

Shortage of Personnel: Another impact of school kidnapping on education is shortage of school personnel due to frequent attack on teachers and staff. According to a report by UNICEF, over 2,295 teachers have been killed. This has resulted in shortage of teachers and as a result, millions of children have been deprived of the chance of schooling that could transform their lives (O'Mallay, 2011).

Cost Implication: School kidnapping has also cost the government a lot of resources. After the abduction of the 276 girls from Chibok, the government established the Safe Schools Initiative. The programme was established for rebuilding the schools that were affected by terrorism and for adding security to schools in the affected states and transferring schools to less volatile states. The government in conjunction reportedly raised Thirty million dollars with the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education for global Education Gordon Brown for the project. This is reiterated in Edama and Nwankwo (2013) who stated that while spending on defense provides security, which sustains a stable business environment, it consumes resources that could be put to more productive use.

Psychological Trauma: The exposure of children has children to traumatic events such traumatic events has detrimental consequences on their mental health and psychological wellbeing (Barenbaum, Ruchkin &Schwab-stone, 2004). This affects their ability to perform well in school which is a serious set back in education.

Apathy to Schooling: There has been an increased apathy to schooling in the northern part of Nigeria. The Northern Nigeria accounts for about fifty percent of the population, and yet, it accounts for over seventy percent of the 13.2 million out of school children in the country. While basic education remains free in the region, there are not many northerners trooping to schools as the statistics above shows (Tolu, 2019). According to Oladunjoye and Omemu (2013), attendance at school is dependent on the readiness of the child, encouragement from parents, the provision of school materials, the distance to school and very importantly the security of the child.

Conclusion

Education that is supposed to be an antidote to insecurity is now the target of criminals and terrorists. School kidnapping has very devastating effect on education. This paper has been able to outline the various incidents of school kidnapping and the effects on education sector of the economy.

Recommendations

- The safe school initiative should be taken serious and other security strategies should be put in place in schools especially in the Northern part of the country
- Incentives should be given to the affected communities in order to curd the increasing apathy to schooling evident in the northern Nigeria.
- Psychological intervention should be provided to the affected communities and students to enable them recover mentally.
- Crime should be dealt with from the root by equipping the people with the tools needed to fight poverty, which is the number one cause of crime.

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About the Authors

1. Grace Ugomma Okoro is a Senior Legal Officer with the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council. She holds LL.B. B.L and LL.M with over 10 years post call practice experience. Her work over the years has focused on Medical Law, Crime Law, Human Rights Law, Environmental Rights, ADR, Development Law, etc, as she has contributed to various national and international topics. She is currently a PhD research student and her hobbies include listening to music, traveling, social causes, topical research, etc.
   E-mail: eugosyn1@yahoo.com

2. Nneka Cynthia Ohaeri is a Research Officer in Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council. Her work focuses on educational policies and implementation. She has authored several books and has contributed widely to various national and international journals. She is currently a PhD student.
   E-mail: nekcindy@yahoo.com

Bandit Attacks on Schools and the Probabilities of Better Education for the Nigerian Child:

Implications for the Education System in the 21st Century

By

Emmanuel Mamman, PhD

Abstract

The recent spate of mass kidnappings of schoolchildren unarguably poses one of the gravest existential threats to the Nigerian education system. With the series of school attacks, a significant blow had been dealt to the efforts of government to reduce the number of out-of-school children in Nigeria. From desk research, the paper analyzed issues around the vulnerabilities of schools and the implications of continued attacks on the Nigerian education system. It also provided policy recommendations as way forward for Nigeria, in her quest to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 4 as an agenda for 2030, among the comity of nations.

Introduction

Education is a vital sector in any nation. It is a major investment in human capital development and plays a critical role in long-term productivity and growth of any nation at both micro and macro levels. It pertains to the all-round development of individuals. Societies with higher levels of education tend to be healthier, have higher rates of economic stability, lower crime, and greater equality. Customarily, education is exclusively used for the development of human beings in the cognitive, affective, psychomotor and psycho-productive domains (Kingdom & Maekae, 2013). It involves teaching and learning that results in desirable human behaviour. Fafunwa (1974) sees education as what each generation gives to its younger ones, which makes them, develop attitudes, abilities, skills and other behaviour that reflects the positive values of the society in which they live. But this laudable process is being threatened by the spate of attacks unleashed on schools in Nigeria in recent times.

In Nigeria, students have been risking their lives for an education. Like in most parts of the world, schooling comes with its fair share of challenges, but when students risk losing their freedom or lives at school, it is dangerous and unprecedented. Consequently, it will be difficult to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, set out by the United Nations in 2015. SDG 4 seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". But in Nigeria, going to school has become like going to a battlefront where bullets are used freely. In recent times, and particularly in the last seven or so months, violent attacks on schools and students by terrorists and bandits have resulted in killing, kidnap or abduction of students and teachers. Cases of mass abduction of students in Gestapo style by bandits and other criminal gangs have been reported in Katsina, Niger, Zamfara, Kaduna and Kebbi states, and earlier in Borno and Yobe states by Boko Haram. Nextier SPD (2021) observed that apart from the collection of huge ransoms from the families of victims, a number of abductees have been tortured and some even killed. The attacks on schools has become frequent to the extent that Nigerians are beginning to accept that education in Nigeria will never be safe; that attending school is a risky venture that portends loss of life, loss of freedom and loss of rights.

This is happening in spite of the fact that the Universal Declaration of Human rights affirms that education is a fundamental human right for everyone and this right has been further elucidated in the Convention Against Discrimination in Education. The right to education is a human right and is indispensable for the exercise of other human rights because quality education aims to ensure the development of a fully rounded human being (Utome, 2021). The criminal attacks on schools and its wider implications on education in Nigeria have been widely condemned locally and internationally. The United Nations' Children Fund (UNICEF) for instance, has expressed concern about the attacks and abduction of children in some parts of West and Central Africa, noting that no fewer than 950 pupils have been abducted from their schools in the last six months (The Nation Newspaper, 8 July, 2021). The threats to the education of Nigerian children must be addressed as well as its impacts on their wellbeing and potentials as leaders of tomorrow. Due to the attacks, some schools have been forced to close down to prevent further abduction. Students are prone to

be abducted, forced into early marriages, sexually abused and sometimes used as arsenals to wage war against the state.

The number of Nigeria's out-of-school children is increasing. Currently, about 10.5 million Nigerian children are said to be out-of-School. According to the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), one in every five of the world's Out-Of-School children is in Nigeria. The reasons for this devolve to sociocultural and socioeconomic factors, and other structural vulnerabilities. Because of this, thousands of children in Nigeria may never attend school, since the possibility of being in school is also impacted by violence and conflict. This paper therefore examines the implications of these attacks and highlights possible ways of addressing the rising cases of attacks on schools in Nigeria, but particularly in northern Nigeria.

Incidences of School attacks in Nigeria

The past ten years, (2011 – 2021) have seen a lot of attacks on schools in Nigeria. Even though most of these attacks were not reported in the media, their occurrence all over the country is not in doubt. Most of the earlier reported cases of attacks took place in the northern part of Nigeria where the Boko Haram operations are more prevalent. On the 6th of July 2013, a mass shooting occurred at the Mamudo Government Secondary Yobe State. It was reported that 41 students and a teacher lost their lives, while Boko Haram sect claimed responsibility of the attack. While the pain and anguish of this attack was yet to ebb, another attack was carried out on the 29th of September 2013 in Gujba College still in Yobe state and 44 people were reported killed. On 25th February 2014, some five months after this attack, the Federal Government College Buni Yadi, Yobe State was attacked, leaving 59 boys dead and the entire 24 halls in the college burnt down (Nwosu, et al, 2019). This particular attack sent a signal that the Boko Haram sect was out to end every form of western education in Nigeria as parents and guardians became extremely terrified to send their wards to school. Ibrahim et al (2015) noted that the Boko Haram insurgency had been characterized by very high levels of destruction and violence against the population. That the insurgency is part of the menace of international terrorism threatening the contemporary world and its Nigerian dimension has become the deadliest terrorist movement in the world today.

They observed that schools have been a particular focus of destruction or damage by Boko Haram. By the 14th of April 2014, the Boko Haram sect attacked Government Girls College in Chibok Local Government Area of Borno state and kidnapped 276 girls who were writing their exams. Among the earlier attacks mentioned above, this Chibok girls kidnapping received unprecedented publicity and became a global issue as many interest groups emerged calling for the rescue of “our girls” (Nwosu, et al, 2019). Some of these girls have been rescued while many are still in captivity where no one can say anything about their fate. Another incidence was the attack on a private secondary school, Babington Macaulay Junior Seminary, Ikorodu in Lagos State on the 2nd of March 2016 where unknown gunmen abducted 3 of their students. On the 13th of January 2017, ten students and staff of Nigerian Tulip International College in Isheri, (formerly Nigerian Turkish International College) Ogun State were abducted. By the 16th January 2017, two teenage suicide bombers detonated bombs in the University of Maiduguri which killed 3 people including a Professor. Also on May 25 2017, a group of gunmen attacked Lagos State Model College, Igbonla Epe and abducted 6 students despite the perceived security in the school. On the 19th of February 2018, in what seems like a repeat of the Chibok girls` attack four years earlier, 111 schoolgirls from the Government Girls Science and Technical College Dapchi, Yobe State were abducted. Even though most of the girls have been released, this particular case showed failure of the existing security architecture to proactively secure the volatile area as Dapchi which is very close to Chibok in the north-eastern part of Nigeria (Nwosu, et al, 2019).

Following the wave of banditry attacks in the northwest region of the country, some schools have witnessed such sad events. For instance, on February 17, 2021, 41 students and some staffers were kidnapped at the Government Science College, Kagara, in Niger State. Ten days after this incident, another set of 317 students were kidnapped at Government Girls Science Secondary School, Jangebe in Zamfara State. Less than two weeks after the Jangebe incident, 39 students were abducted at the Federal College of Mechanisation, Afaka, in Kaduna state.

As the nation was reeling in pain over the incessant abductions, 20 students and two staffers

were again kidnapped at Greenfield University in the same state of Kaduna. The national disgrace continued on May 30 and June 7 when 100 and 102 students were abducted in an Islamic school in Niger State and at the Federal Government College, Birni Yauri, Kebbi State, respectively. Flowing from the preceding, between December 11, 2020, and June 7, 2021, alone, a total of 1,045 persons were kidnapped from educational institutions in the Northwest and Northcentral regions. That is an average of 149 students per month, 37 per week, and five per day (Nextier SPD, June 28 – July 5, 2021). The latest is the attack on the Bethel Baptist High School in Kaduna state where the bandits kidnapped about 140 students plus staff members on Tuesday July 6 2021. All these attacks indicate vulnerability of schools which may escalate further into a bigger security and education challenge if not arrested. Public safety has mainly become elusive in contemporary Nigeria on account of worsening insecurity. Educational institutions have been subjected to persistent violent attacks across northern Nigeria in recent years. The recent spate of abductions and mass kidnappings of school children probably represents the biggest existential threat to the future of school children in Northern Nigeria. What makes the school attacks in the North bad in the long run is that they combine two negative streaks. First is the Boko Haram backward ideology that 'Western education is evil', and the second being the ransom-seeking criminal mercantile motive of the bandits (Peterside, 2021).

Why Schools Are Vulnerable to Attacks

A number of structural issues that makes school children vulnerable to bandit attacks are common knowledge in Nigeria. For once, we are aware that bandits operate in rural communities where a lack of deterrence creates the opportunity for criminal activities. There is usually little or no adequate security presence in most of these communities often with households separated by footpaths and interspersed with forest areas, rendering them vulnerable to attacks. This explains why the attackers can sometimes operate for several hours without resistance from security operatives who are several miles away. Peterside (2021) observed that this situation is made worse by the absence of efficient community policing mechanisms capable of addressing the hinterlands' peculiar security challenges.

On their part, the Nextier SPD (2021) explained that most schools in the North are owned by the government, unlike the South, where there is thriving private ownership of schools. The public ownership of schools in the North makes them soft targets by bandits and terrorists who can hardly attack the government officials whom they have grievances against. That in the North, most schools are located in the outskirts of cities, while many others are found in remote villages. However, the siting of schools in the outskirts of the communities was a common feature both in Southern and Northern Nigeria during the colonial era, as communities allocated pieces of land for the building of schools outside their living quarters. They argued that development and relatively small landmass in the South, compared to the North, has helped to integrate the schools and living quarters, but this is not the same in the North, which has a large landmass and less development.

Again, most public schools across Nigeria are poorly maintained, often lacking even the most rudimentary protection such as perimeter fencing and security guards. The absence of these makes school raids easy. Another reason for the vulnerability of schools is lack of sufficient security personnel to man the schools. Nigeria's inadequate security personnel are terribly overstretched at the moment because of several theatres of armed conflicts. High numbers of security personnel are currently deployed against the Boko Haram terrorists in the North East, while several others are engaged in South East following secessionist agitations by neo-Biafran movements. Some other security personnel are in the North West and North Central zones, trying to contain attacks by bandits. The police are made to protect the wealthy and political elites, and this has made many places under-policed, which makes school raids by merchants of violence quite easy (Nextier SPD, June 28 – July 5, 2021).

Implications of the Attacks on Children's Education

As noted earlier, the spate of abductions and mass kidnappings of school children represents one of the biggest existential threats to the future of school children in Nigeria, and particularly the North. According to the Nextier SPD (2021) between 11 December 2020 and 7 June 2021, a total of 1045 persons were kidnapped from educational institutions in the North West and North Central

regions, giving an average of 149 students per month, 37 per week, and 5 per day (Nextier SPD, June 28 – July 5, 2021). Peterside (2021) noted that parents are now afraid to send their children to school across the region for fear of being kidnapped or killed. The ripple effect of this is increase in the number of out-of-school children and the vulnerabilities associated with the phenomenon, including early marriage and rebel recruitment. In fact, Peterside posited that due to these attacks and other associated challenges, Nigeria already has about 10.5 million children that are not in school (Peterside, 2021). Also, such youths without training or education can easily drift to urban cities to engage in different forms of criminalities for survival.

It is noticeable that the Northern part of the country is already the most educationally disadvantaged region. Going by available statistics, the low cut off marks for unity school entrance and the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) admission requirements (20 and 160 respectively) is a direct reflection of this situation. The insecurity will further depress standards and interest. According to Peterside, of the estimated 10.5 million out-of-school children in the country, 69 percent come from the North. The females are mostly affected due to some cultural practices and economic issues, limiting children's active participation in school (Peterside, 2021)

With its debilitating effects on economic and education systems, the intractable Boko Haram insurgency is also heavily concentrated in the region. Additionally, the Nigerian education system is still recovering from the devastating effects of the prolonged school closure from the COVID-19 pandemic. With the spate of recent school kidnapping added to an already bad situation, the result is a reduction in community and parental trust in the education system, further complicating access to quality and equitable education by the Nigerian child. With the Boko Haram in states such as Borno, the epicenter of the violence, schools were closed for over a year. In August 2013, about 882 classrooms were destroyed in Borno state. While in Yobe state, all schools were shut down between June-September 2013 and by March 2014, the Federal Government closed five Federal Government Colleges (Unity Schools) in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states. In the Lake Chad area – in Cameroun, Chad, Niger and Nigeria – an estimated 1,100 schools were destroyed in 2015 alone (Ibrahim, et al, 2015). Authorities in Niger, Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara states have also recently closed down some schools as a result of the current upsurge in banditry attacks. Some Boarding schools are now to operate as Day Schools. All this has adverse consequences for the Nigerian child trying to access quality education for future.

According to Peterside, the consequences of this are enormous: First, with the current spate of kidnappings, parents may lose confidence in sending their children to school in a region where many parents are not doing that already, and many resources are expended to encourage them to do that. Secondly, parents who value education and send their children to schools may withdraw them out of fear of the safety of their children. Most parents will protect their children than risk them at altar of getting Western education. This will cause a decline in the number of children of school age attending schools in the North and inadvertently play to the doctrine and philosophy of the dreaded Boko Haram and Islamic terrorists (Peterside, 2021).

This possible decline in education has long-term implications. A Northern Nigeria that has not educated its children portends danger for the future. First is the opportunity cost of lack of foundational education – the human capital of the future is degraded and wiped out because of the present predicament of kidnapping school children in Nigeria. Second, the economic loss will be enormous – the lost earnings and the cost of carrying a considerable youth population that are less educated, with little or no skills and hugely relying on government for survival is a travesty that will challenge Nigeria's status among the comity of nations in the 21st century.

Further still, there is the social cost implication and this can be even far more disturbing. Lack of education, literacy and opportunities are among the root causes of criminality, banditry and terrorism in Northern Nigeria. Having a mass of unemployed and unemployable youths in the future will make things worse and may destroy Nigeria. Statistics show that in the next 15 years, barring any wars or natural disaster, Nigeria's population will be heading to 300 million with many young people. This population size should be a blessing if these young people are educated and

have requisite skills to compete in the post-pandemic, technology-driven world. Imagine what will happen if a large proportion misses out on education now. It will be a lost opportunity and a recipe for disaster.

In a Boko Haram ravaged North East and the now bandits' playfield, the North West, a safe school is such a myth and education for all can be greatly challenged. The risks Nigerian children face in accessing education negates the hopes of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4, which is inclusive and quality education. Nextier SPD observed that the continued exclusion of many Nigerian children in educational opportunities due to violence will affect their ability to access economic opportunities and deepen human capital deficits. They argued that socioeconomic challenges are already contributing to violent conflict hotspots, and education is expected to prepare the young population in becoming economically buoyant and self-reliant (Nextier SPD, 27 May, 2021).

Education also trains individuals to relate to and interact meaningfully with others in the society and to appreciate the importance of effective organization for human progress. Here, the school system within the educational system fosters this development. The school brings people of different cultural backgrounds together for a common purpose. This promotes mutual co-existence among the different students. Learners who strongly identify with their school are thought to have a more positive attitude towards teachers, other learners and the entire educational enterprise (Armstrong, et al 1981). But contrary to these foreseeable gains that education promises, Nigerian children are facing life-impacting experiences in their quest to access quality education. Lack of quality education in Nigeria would contribute to many social ills, including crime, prostitution, and the breakdown of law and order. Surge in bandit attacks on schools will make the students to continue to receive inferior education; they will continue to suffer mass unemployment and armed bandits will continue to rise; the society may continue to have illiterates and mediocres as political leaders; the society may continue to have political parties without ideology, and Nigeria may continue to fall behind economically, socially and politically if education is not promoted.

Conceptual Approach to School Security

Following the recent spate of mass kidnappings of school children, it can be said that the Nigerian education system is facing difficult challenges. The rise of insecurity and the current war against education in Nigeria calls for increased securitization of hotspots and learning environments. According to Messina (2014), securitization is a process by which ostensibly non-security issues are transformed into urgent security concerns which are therefore portrayed as existential threats to a referent object by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind. It has also been conceptualized as process-oriented actions towards security threats which is contrary to materialist approaches of classical security studies. Securitization emphasize how an actor can transform certain issue into a matter of security threat in order to allow for the use of extraordinary measures to address it (Nwosu, et al, 2019).

The framework for securitization allows for a threat to be probable and protracted. According to the securitization theorists, when a subject is successfully securitized, a higher degree of attention and resources are devoted to it despite the existence of other subjects that might pose more threat but are unsuccessfully securitized. This framework permits state governments for example, to review school arrangements based on conflict and security risks in violent zones. The practice of boarding schools in high risks areas to be abolished to reduce vulnerability of school children. Government to expand the securitization of communities prone to attacks. The establishment of community policing frameworks may create avenue for local intelligence that will inform formal security units of impending attacks by bandits and terrorists. Also, children focused interventions in high risk areas will ensure positive outcomes. More children risk being kidnapped or coerced into joining armed groups due to their vulnerability. More livelihood, nutrition and child protection programmes should salvage the current challenges facing many children in Nigeria (Nextier SPD, 2021).

We must teach students how to respond to security emergencies. They must be taught basic self-

defense and evasive skills that makes it harder for kidnappers to simply whisk them off without a run for their money. Schools must invest in their security infrastructure to make themselves less vulnerable to kidnappers. Round-the-clock surveillance systems and well-lit surroundings are a turn off for kidnappers. Security should involve existence of environmental factors that instill peace of mind in an individual in order to empower him/her to function optimally in the society. Poor human relations between teacher and student can hamper students' mental health and cause insecurity. Poor infrastructural designs in schools can expose students to insecurity problems like health hazards and stress. Some female students feel threatened as a result of rampant incidences of sexual abuse and rape in schools and the society (Akintunde, 2015).

It is clear that Nigeria already has a problem of out-of-school children that is now worsened by renewed insecurities. Government must focus on making schools safer for children. According to Nwosu, et al (2019), a safe school is one that fosters peaceful, positive or cordial relationships among students, teachers and administrators. As armed non-state actors continue to attack schools, more children within school-age will miss out on education and life-enhancing opportunities. Human capital development will plumb new depths in the affected areas, and this can propel further hostilities. It is crucial to renew academic schedules in terror hotspots based on the situation or circumstances on ground. Government must improve partnerships with development agencies to increase education intervention funds in violent hotspots. Education intervention strategies must now have a robust conflict-sensitive component that will ensure the safety of the academic environment. New engagements at the local level must establish community security networks that will safeguard learning fields. A community policing approach in rural communities that is supported by formal security structures will help to securitize communities and encourage learning. Intervention efforts and security measures must include community actors in collectively ensuring the safety of school children in Nigeria.

Targeted kidnapping of school children began in 2014 with the mass abduction of 276 female students in Chibok by Boko Haram insurgents. That event was ideologically motivated, and designed to extort concessions from the government. Recently, abductions have become more profit-driven, involving organized and unorganized criminal groups. The profit dimension to the kidnappings can easily complicate Nigeria's security problems, as they could become more frequent given the high level of poverty and youth unemployment in the region amid the stark absence of legitimate economic opportunities. If education is to survive, it is crucial to urgently change the current dynamics and make schools safe again. This crisis requires swift and comprehensive action, both in prevention and supporting victims to minimize long-term damages.

The Safe School Initiative

The Safe Schools Initiative (SSI) was set up by former President Goodluck Jonathan in collaboration with the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, Mr. Gordon Brown (former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom), and a coalition of Nigerian business leaders during the World Economic Forum on Africa (WEFA) in Abuja on the 7th of May, 2014. A Steering Committee was inaugurated on the 9th of July 2014, with a mandate to provide overall guidance in the implementation of the project. The committee was co-chaired by the Co-Coordinating Minister of the Economy, the Honourable Minister of Finance and Mr. Gordon Brown. At the inaugural meeting of the Steering Committee on the 17th of July, 2014, a Technical Committee was set up with the mandate of developing a framework for the speedy actualization of the initiative (Ibrahim et al, 2015). The Technical Committee was permitted to co-opt any other member of technical or administrative staff to support its task.

Although the SSI is primarily aimed at addressing educational challenges in the context of insecurity, the initiative is being run by the Ministry of Finance in the Steering Committee and NEMA in the Technical Committee. It is an international collaborative effort to provide a safe schooling environment for children in the North East and is responsible for the development and implementation of comprehensive plans for the provision of a safe learning environment for education in the country as a whole, starting with the North East.

The SSI was launched after the abduction of the Chibok school girls by the Boko Haram in 2014. It was targeted at the North Eastern part of the country following terrorist attacks on the region. The SSI was a plan to build fences around vulnerable schools or relocate students in high risk areas and other strategies to strengthen education in camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The sum of about $20m was pledged for the three-year project supported by the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education. However, Peterside noted that the scheme has been beset with challenges. According to him, although most of the recent kidnappings happened in the North West, which the SSI did not cover, the 2018 abduction of 110 school girls from Dapchi Secondary school in Yobe state raised questions about the success of the Initiative (Peterside, 2021) He also observed that despite the creation of military posts around a number of schools, many schools have been left unprotected.

For efficient securitization of schools, the main principles of SSI should not be discarded, and there should be a re-evaluation of its strong points, including its emphasis on the training of school staff to deal with emergencies and a focused extension of the initiative to cover all states under the threat of bandits. Authorities should also involve international organizations like UNESCO to effectively protect vulnerable schools in the northern part of the country.

The governments of the various states in the north should devise ways of creating incentives to sustain interest in education to ease the trauma of these abductions. Both the federal and state governments must strategically deal with the persistent violence and insecurity in our country and devise a strategic plan to regain the control of Nigeria's "ungoverned spaces", to ensure the safety and security of all Nigerians. Our schools can only be safe if the larger society is safe.

Stemming the Tide

Insecurity is a threat to learning. Many school children in Nigeria are faced with mounting violence at places of learning, and because no nation grows beyond its level of educational development, there is therefore need to adequately secure vulnerable school environment. It is important that the entire educational system and infrastructure is securitized. Adeniran & Castradori (2021) outlined the steps to make schools safe again:

1. Comprehensive threat assessment of schools in the entire Northern region, with subsequent closures and relocation. In all areas of the North, even those removed from the Boko Haram-controlled Northeast, numerous armed groups are increasingly seeing the potential to "cash in" on insecure schools through a "kidnap and ransom" approach. Conducting a threat assessment in all areas of the country deemed vulnerable to such armed groups - including evaluating the location of the schools, their relationship to the surrounding communities (through consultations with local traditional leaders), and the state of their infrastructure - should be a first step to assessing which schools are most at risk. Institutions determined to be unsafe should immediately be shut, with contingency plans in place to facilitate temporary alternative learning arrangements (here the lessons learned during the COVID-19 crisis may be useful), together with strategies for relocating students to safer environments. Preventing more kidnappings should be the priority, not only for the welfare of potential future victims, but also with a view to salvaging any remaining public confidence in the safety of schools and avoiding further insecurity-related dropouts, which Nigeria's education system can ill afford.

2. The development of a strong community support network to ensure affected communities are not left behind. Children and their parents who fall victim to armed kidnapping groups cannot be left unaided. Ensuring that they mentally recover from their trauma should be a central tenet of any intervention strategy that seeks to limit the adverse impacts of kidnappings on education. Children need strong community support networks tailored to the needs of children in conflict zones, including the training of teachers to help students recover from traumatic experiences and a greater availability of guidance counselors experienced in assisting trauma victims. If children are not to become permanently disillusioned with education, the fostering of positive emotions through affirmative training and building happier school-associated memories is crucial.

3. A reevaluation and revamping of the Safe Schools Initiative (SSI). The SSI was launched with much

fanfare in the aftermath of the globally publicized abduction of the Chibok girls by Boko Haram in 2014. After a promising start - including several tens of millions of dollars pledged by a coalition of the Nigerian government, international donors, and Nigerian business leaders; a plan to relocate students in high-risk areas; and strategies to strengthen education in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) - it remains unclear how impactful the programme has been so far.

While evidence of SSI's success is lacking, this should not automatically lead to a disregard of its main principles. A reevaluation of its strong points, including its emphasis on the training of school staff to deal with emergencies and a focused extension of the initiative beyond the original scope for only the BAY states (Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states), should be examined. The SSI was originally designed with the aid of international organizations such as UNESCO, and the government should not shy away from leaning on the foundations of a programme that, if well-managed and sufficiently funded, could be effective in the North.

4. Addressing the long-term insecurity threat. The importance of dealing with the surge of economically motivated school kidnappings directly in schools cannot be understated. However, it is naive to assume that a school- or community-level intervention could suffice in the long run. Nigeria continues to suffer from perennial multipronged insecurities ranging from terrorism—there were at least 1,600 terrorism-caused deaths in the 11 months between January and November 2020—to the violent, ethnically tinged herder-farmer communal conflicts over agricultural land, which kill several thousands of people yearly. Without a comprehensive strategy to deal with the persistent state of violence, including a coherent plan to regain control of Nigeria's "ungoverned spaces," imagining a safe space for education is difficult. Schools are only safe in so far as the larger society is safe. Nigerian policymakers, school leaders, and communities must effectively and creatively come together to help reverse the current economic and education dynamics to avoid a catastrophic collapse.

Policy Recommendations

The Nextier SPD (2021) suggested the following recommendations:

- There is a need for more recruitment of security operatives and to equip them adequately and keep their morale boosted.

- The obvious vulnerability of public educational institutions across the country, especially in northern Nigeria, demands urgent attention. Schools on the outskirts and remote communities should be protected with perimeter fences and equipped with state-of-the-art gadgets such as cameras so that intruders can be easily spotted, and security reinforcement applied

- As part of refurbishing security architecture in Nigeria, priority should be given to strengthening intelligence-gathering capacity. Terrorism and kidnapping are intelligence-driven. If we must tackle them head-on, we must raise our national intelligence as Nigerians to fight this menace. Bandits normally collude with some local people before, during and after their school raids.

- The root causes of banditry and kidnapping need to be addressed

Conclusion

The mass kidnapping of Nigerian schoolchildren portends human security problem and a consequent deficit in the capacity of Nigeria's education system to lead to all-round development of individuals. With education generally understood as "a leading determinant of economic growth" and "a key to escaping poverty," the attacks on schools adds to a long-lasting challenge to the economic development required to stabilize and rebuild a nation where of people live in extreme poverty. New research shows that Nigeria is among oil-exporting nations that will be highly vulnerable to declining oil revenues and consequent political destabilization as the world economy shifts from oil to renewable energy sources (Iwara, 2021). Hence, the need for Nigeria to rebuild and secure schools. Fighting kidnapping and kidnappers is a costly endeavour. But Nigeria rather spend that money, time and attention where it matters than hand it to unscrupulous elements of society.

Indeed, attacks on schools will engender some negative consequences for children in Nigeria,

but particularly children of the northern region and this can manifest in a number of ways. First, the attacks will further widen the educational imbalance between the northern and southern parts of the country. Southern Nigeria has been maintaining educational lead over the sprawling North since the pre-independence era. This lead undermines the ability of northern youth to compete favourably with their southern counterparts, and as a result, fuels envy and violence (Peterside, 2021). Second, the closure of schools will compound the Almajiri crisis and the phenomenon of street urchins, thus increasing the number of out-of-school children in the region, which is already over 10 million. Third, the unintended consequences of government school closure are likely to make young people in the north more vulnerable to recruitment by criminal and jihadist groups.

Therefore, investment in education is an important key towards the achievement of a stable society. The entire educational system of Nigeria requires proactive attention from the government in view of the attacks on schools. Attacks on schools will make the lofty goals of education unachievable in the 21st century Nigeria, but with education, Nigeria`s aspiration to be among the leading economies of the world will be actualized.

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About the Author

Emmanuel Mamman, PhD, is Director of Research, Institute for Peace & Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Abuja. A Researcher and Policy Analyst. Dr. Mamman has wide experience and skills in research, policy advisory, problem analysis, program design and intervention in various aspects of policy, governance, and conflict resolution. He is highly experienced in project/programme management and activity-based costing. He has a number of published works, among which is, *"Public Policy Response to Violence: Case Study of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria".*

IMPLICATIONS OF BANDITRY ON THE NIGERIAN STATE

Caroline Omale

Abstract

In the last decade, Nigeria has witnessed various security challenges ranging from kidnappings, Niger Delta militantancy, the Movement of the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), banditry, kidnappings for ransom, insurgency, farmer/herder clashes, communal clashes, cattle rustling, electoral violence, IPOB uprising etc. making terrorism and insurgency the greatest challenge the Nigerian government has faced in less than a decade. Due to the rate of unemployment, there is high number of persons desperately needing to meet their demands, as such a lot of them engage in criminality such as banditry and kidnappings for ransom. This has led to high fatalities and dislocation of people from their places of origin. The educational sector is also affected as schools have been forced to close due to abduction/ kidnapping of students from schools. These challenges have grave socio-economic implications not only in the northwestern states of Nigeria but are now national security issue that tremendously setback the socio-economic development of the country.

This research attempts to analyze the implications of banditry in Nigeria. Data were collected through the use of secondary sources which include published books, journals and relevant publications from the internet etc. The research recommends amongst others an integrative response approach that requires a combination of conflict management mechanisms such as consultation with non-state actors and communities affected, dialogue, community policing, reconciliation and security sector reforms by the respective state governments for response and mitigation to enhance sustainable peace and security in the country.

Keywords: Banditry, Security, State, Implication, Abduction.

Introduction

The modern state of Nigeria was the product of a merger of the North and Southern protectorates with the colony of Lagos by the British in 1914. Political independence was attained in 1960 but seven years later the country plunged into a three-year civil-war (1967-1970) prompted by the Eastern region to secede from the federation and establish the Republic of Biafra. In it's over 60 years of existence as an independent nation; Nigeria has faced diverse forms of security challenges. These challenges which emanates mostly from within had consistently over the years, disrupted governance, caused massive deaths, created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, threatened the corporate existence of the nation and portrayed Nigeria poorly at the international world (Osuji, 2013).

Since the return of democracy in 1999 from military rule, elections in Nigeria has been a battle between adversaries who must win elections at all cost. Thus, elections are characterized by culture of violence as a result of intolerance. Dissatisfaction over the unequal distribution of resources has also led to the emergence of groups such as the MEND, Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast and also the likes of IPOB. All of which pose security threat to the Nigerian state.

Since 2009, the northeastern Nigeria, particularly Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states have witnessed a dastard activities of Boko Haram characterized by kidnapping of people, suicide bombing, destruction of private & public infrastructures and sacking of villages which in turn led to the displacement of persons from their villages to become IDP's in other states and refugees in neighboring countries.

In recent times, banditry has become a leading cause of insecurity in the nation; particularly in the Northwestern region. The hideous crimes perpetrated by bandits have created atmosphere of fear and made the region unsafe for both residents and travellers. Mass abduction of students and villagers, highway robbery, cattle rustling, attacks of security formations and incessant killings are daily witnessed. A number of factors have been said to encourage the bandits to operate within the Northwestern and indeed Nigerian territory. (United Nation's Small Arms Survey, 2004) opines that”

Proximity to conflict zones as well as easy availability of weapons" as a factor responsible for the fragile security situation. Other factors could be rising poverty, high unemployment, illiteracy and the breakdown of traditional social control structures.

Going by media reports on the general crime situation and the public concern in the country particularly western Nigeria, armed banditry constitutes one of the greatest rising problems in terms of violation of criminal law. Besides being one of the most frequent and dreadful crimes in contemporary Nigeria, armed banditry have continued to cause distress among residents, individuals and communities of these regions. The spate of banditry has been one of the front burner issues that ignited heated reactions amongst Nigerians. Heightened scares across the country, citizens, specifically those from the lower class and now the upper class, are unfortunately at the receiving end of the menace. The development has sadly continued to claim lives while simultaneously living significant number of facilities destroyed aside payment of ransom. This prompted criticisms from opinion leaders who bicker on the security approach and responses used in confronting the bandits and insurgents ravaging the country. While Nigeria tries to cope with tensions generated by diversity of its population, struggle for economic independence, defense of its territorial integrity and against organized crime like armed banditry and violent conflict.

Several attempts have been made by the government to curb the menace and further boost internal security in the affected states (WARN, 2019). The issue at stake is a matter of urgent national concern that craves effective measures for a lasting solution. It is thus imperative to review the approaches used in tackling the ugly situation. This research work has recognized to date the concerted efforts by government and other stakeholders to resolve the conflict, including dialogue with the bandits but the efforts are yet to yield the expected result fruit. It is therefore time to scale up on the kinetic and non-kinetic approaches to flush the perpetrators of this act from their hideouts, and trace their sponsors and make them face the wrath of the law.

Conceptual clarification

For clearer understanding it is important to make some conceptual clarifications of the major variables in this paper. The major variables are security, banditry, state.

Security

Some scholars define security narrowly at the individual level as the absence of violence and loss of property; at the national or state level, it is the absence of threat to the survival of the core interests, territorial sovereignty or integrity and development of a country (Etannibi et al., 2010).

Security is conceptualized as safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression, and the protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily lives, whether in homes, jobs or communities (UNDP, 1994).

Security can also be conceptualized as actions and measures, including legislative and operational procedures adopted to ensure peace, stability and the general wellbeing of a nation and its citizens (Skinkeiye, 2004).

Security in this context can be defined as a state of being free from danger or threat, the safety of a state or organization against criminal activities.

Banditry

Banditry refers to an act or practice of robbery, the use of force and violence in areas where the rule of law is weak.

Banditry refers to the incidences of armed robbery or allied violent crimes, such as kidnapping, cattle rustling and village or market raids. It involves the use of force, or threat to that effect, to intimidate a person or a group of persons in order to rob, rape or kill (Okolie & Okpaleke, 2014).

Banditry means occurrence or prevalence of armed robbery or violent crime. It involves the use of force, or threat to that effect, to intimidate a person with the intent to rob or kill. It has been a common genre of crime, as well as cause violence in contemporary societies (Nigeria Watch, 2011).

State

A state exists to promote the welfare of its citizens and to protect their lives and properties. It is only in

doing these things that it earns the loyalty of its citizens and extracts compliance without recourse to force (Mbachu, 2009). A well-functioning state must seek to guarantee the well-being of the greatest number of citizens; maintain law and order; protect life and property; defend and enhance individual liberties, practice good governance and sustain economic growth and development. Where these responsibilities cannot be guaranteed, the state loses the right to rule. A nation-state is therefore defined as a territorial integrity, ruled by a sovereign, recognized internally and globally as having de facto or de jure powers to govern and provide for the welfare and security of its citizens.

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study, the QUEER LADDER THEORY will be adopted. The Queer Ladder theory was influenced by an American Sociologist, Daniel Bell (1919-2011), who coined the idea of "queer ladder" in an attempt to explain the functional significance of organized crime as a desperate tactic for socio-economic empowerment and social climbing. This analytical construct has since fertilized into a popular theoretical framework widely used in contemporary crime studies.

The Queer Ladder Theory has three assumptions;

1. Organized crime is an instrumental behaviour/practice; it is a means to an end.
2. It is an instrument of social climbing, fame and socio-economic advancement.
3. It is a means to accumulate wealth and build power (Mallory, 2007).

The Queer Ladder theory assumes that organized crime thrives in a context where the government's capacity to dictate and sanction abnormality and crime is poor, where public corruption is endemic and where legitimate livelihood opportunities are slim (Nwoye, 2000:in Lyman, 2007). Under these circumstances, the incentive to indulge in life of crime is high, while deterrence from criminal living is low. This creates room for criminal impunity and franchise.

The Queer Ladder theory enables us to situate the prevalence of banditry and organized crime and other forms of criminality in Nigeria. It is noted that banditry in the country has been driven by rat-race for material glorification at the detriment of the development and wellbeing of the people. This has been made worse by the prevailing socioeconomic stagnation and its associated livelihoods crisis in the affected regions and country at large.

The notion of "Ladder in Queer Ladder theory symbolizes social climbing or mobility. The aggrieved and deprived youth of the country results to banditry in order to meet up with their mates. Hence those who take to banditry as a means of social climbing (mobility) are thought to be toeing the awkward, unconventional (queer) path. The adoption of this theory in this study is informed by its analytical utility in providing insights into the sociological foundations of organized crime in developing nations.

Implications of banditry

Socio-Economic implications of banditry

Banditry has serious socio-economic implications in the affected regions and Nigeria as a whole. The atmosphere of fear, violence and uncertainty created by the activities of bandits hinders people from carrying out economic and social activities within the affected region as they could be abducted, robbed, assaulted or even killed. This is not limited to individuals but also to state owned and private institutions as well.

Economic growth thrives in safe and secured environment while a rock-chair economic growth results from a place of insecurity. These indices for economic growth are intricately related. The farmers-herders conflict, cattle rustling and other conflicts accompanied by the migration of Fulani herders and their cattle from some neighboring countries into Nigeria has socio-economic implications for the country's GDP as there is a drop in the livestock contribution growth to GDP in Nigeria 2019 according to Statista, 2021. An additional effect is that "it cost a whole lot of money coupled with the stress and risk of importing cows from neighboring countries for consumption, aside from diary and manure for farming activities" (Saheed, 2019). (Onuah & Akwagyram, 2019) also reported that mining activities have been suspended in Zamfara state due to frequent attacks by armed bandits. The implication of the suspension is that revenue generated through mining in the state has been cut

off, and this may likely affect the aggregate economic activities in the state and country at large.

The North-west region was formerly known for its enormous farming and a major supplier of food consumed within Nigeria and even neighboring countries. However, banditry has nearly crippled this economic activity as farmers daily killed, kidnapped or subjected to other inhumane conditions that make it very hard for them to farm. The implication of these is far reaching as food shortage exposes the country to famine, diseases and other grievous consequences.

Kaduna state that was renowned for the production of textile and agro allied products, automobile assembly plant, furniture and beverage producing industries, oil refining and petrochemical plant which emerged in the late 1970's and several other cottage industrial activities within the state have reduced as expatriates and citizens are afraid of been abducted. The socio-economic activities of the country have been crippled in the affected places as people are living in constant fear of been abducted.

Peace and Security implications of banditry

Nigeria is challenged with conflicts across the nation. Apart from the recurrent conflict between farmers and herdsmen, there are other numerous conflicts ranging from ethnic, religious and political that challenges the nation`s security. Most vicious among the conflicts is banditry, which has widespread security threat. It poses a weighty threat to the country as well as other neighboring countries like Cameroon, Niger and Chad resulting in grave economic and humanitarian consequences. This organized crime has desecrated the sanctity of life and made living extremely difficult for the people in the affected areas.

Banditry has dented and is still denting the image of Nigeria in the international community. The general perception of Nigeria that is also backed by statistics and empirical data places Nigeria as a place that is unsafe. Statistics released by Global Peace Index, (GPI, 2020) have shown that there is a significant decline in peace as Nigeria dropped to 148th out of 163 countries in global peace ranking. As a matter of fact, Nigeria has been identified to be among the 20 least peaceful countries in the world.

The escalation of insecurity in the country most especially the northern part of Nigeria has had a decline in the development of the country with implications for human, economic, political, security and psychological dimensions. There is symbiotic relationship between development and security. Funds channeled towards development are used to fund security. The use of resources to improve a country's security system could be more beneficial in other areas. Therefore, insecurity is a drain on national resources at the expense of people's wellbeing. The adverse effects of insecurity on the economic growth and development of a nation is quite enormous. In Zamfara state, markets have been shut down due to incessant attacks. According to 2019 report on food insecurity and market by Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET), Shinkafi market, a major cross border town in Zamfara state functioned between 30 to 40 percent within the reviewed period, while Dandume market in Katsina state functioned lower trading projections (FEWSNET, 2019)

Educational implications of banditry

Education in Nigeria is been faced with numerous challenges, one of which is the frightening case of students' abduction by bandits. The abduction began in Chibok in 2014. Where 276 schoolgirls were kidnapped in Government Secondary School Chibok, a town in Borno State Nigeria, and spread to Dapchi schoolgirls. The Dapchi abduction took place in February 2018 where 110 schoolgirls were kidnapped by Boko Haram terrorist group from the Government Girls Science and Technical College Yobe state. Many Nigerians thought the two incidences would serve as a wake-up call for government to improve the security situation in schools. However, the continuous abductions of students over the years with the recent incidences in Kaduna (Federal College of Forestry Afaka and Greenfield University) on march 11 2021 is an indication that the security infrastructure has been overwhelmed.

Schools in the region are unable to operate optimally as they fear attacks from bandits. Parents are also reluctant to send their children to schools due to fear of abduction. Some states have also been forced to shut down academy activities as a result of rising attacks and abduction of students. In the wake up of

the Jangebe abduction, the Zamfara state government announced the closure of all boarding schools across the state and Kano state government followed suit by giving a directive for the closure of 10 boarding schools in the state on the 26th February 2021 after the abduction. Kaduna state has also closed secondary and primary school activities.

Some of the instances of attacks by bandits on schools as recorded in the national dailies are as follows;

- December 11, 2020, 300 pupils were kidnapped from a boys' secondary boarding school on the outskirts of Kankara, Katsina state, Nigeria. A gang of gunmen on motorcycles attacked the Government Science Secondary School, where more than 800 pupils resided, and operated for over an hour.
- February 17, 2021, a school pupil was killed and 27 others abducted by armed men at about 3am from their school in Kagera, Niger state, Nigeria (Punch, 2021).
- February 26, 2021, 279 female students aged between 10 and 17 were abducted during a raid by armed bandits. The abduction occurred at the Government Girls Science Secondary School, a boarding school in Jangebe in Zamfara state.
- March 11 2021, gunmen attacked Federal College of Forestry Mechanization, Afaka, Igabi LGA, in Kaduna state and kidnapped 39 students.
- April 20 2021, at least 23 students and staff were kidnapped in Chikun LGA, Kaduna state during an attack by suspected armed bandits at Greenfield university.

These abductions of students further expose children to the risk and fear of exploitation and violence thereby increasing the number of out-of-school children in the country.

Government must ensure adequate deployment of security personnel to man the schools especially the boarding facilities. There is also the need for government to reorganize its intelligence agencies for effective security and policing. There is need for the Governors of various states to increase its investment in educational sector. Our public schools have become nothing to speak of with inadequate functional infrastructure. Most our schools are porous with little presence of security. This has provided easy entrance for bandits into schools.

Government Response

The Federal Government's current counter banditry effort, based on military investigation and raids, is good and commendable. However, more needs to be done to bring about the needed solution. The shortcomings of the military operations have been largely attributed to the operational challenges arising from insufficient knowledge of the vast terrain the bandits operate. Varied joint security operations were instituted in the northwest but the conflict lingers. This was aggravated by the failure of an amnesty program and peace deal inaugurated by the governors of katsina and Zamfara states. The state amnesty programs should be modeled in same line with Operations Safe Corridor; a federal government amnesty program that provides low –risk recruits with a voluntary exit route from Boko Haram. The program has recorded tremendous successes since it's launched in 2019.

Engaging of local vigilantes and community watch groups, who have a better knowledge of the terrain, is also commendable as they have contributed immensely to the successes recorded in the fight to defeat the bandits.

Nigerian security forces have utilized a variety of tactics over the years to combat banditry. Initially, the Federal Government embraced an emergency approach by deploying police and military operations to the states. While the security response has pushed back attacks, destroyed hideouts, and killed and arrested hundreds of bandits, attacks have continued. In 2019, a peace deal was secured between the armed bandits and the Governors of Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara. The deal encompassed disarmament, the release of kidnapped civilians and pardon for the bandits. Although the number of fatalities decreased due to reconciliation initiatives, attacks escalated again in 2020. Mass kidnappings have become a major source of income for criminal and extremist groups since Nigerians often pay ransom to keep victims alive and secure their release, but it also provides incentive for bandits to continue their malign activities.

Effective mechanisms must be implemented to mitigate the threat of banditry in Nigeria. The Federal Government must increase funding for police and

other security forces to effectively oversee rural areas, control cross-border arms proliferation, and strengthen intelligence capabilities. In addition, addressing the root problems that often drive people to violence such as inequality, poverty, lack of education and job opportunities is needed to stem the recruitment of youth into bandit groups.

Recommendations

1. There is need for a holistic review of the nation's security framework. The centralized system of defense and policing has proven to be ineffective in a country like Nigeria. Community policing strategies should be adopted so that policing of a particular region would be the responsibility of the indigenous people of that region who have the knowledge of the region's peculiar challenges, local inhabitants, culture, and geography can proffer peculiar solutions that would be adequate with the region's insecurity dynamics.

2. The task of crime prevention and control is not that of the security agents alone, as all hands must be on deck so as to achieve effective peace and order. Thus a comprehensive security strategy that greatly involves the community must be urgently put in place so as to effectively tackle armed robbery and other sundry crimes militating national security and development.

3. Integrative response approaches that require a combination of conflict management mechanisms such as consultation of actors and communities affected, dialogue, community policing, amnesty, reconciliation and security reforms by the respective state Governments is key to mitigation of banditry in the country.

4. Strategic investments in human and infrastructural development such investments can work to solve the long-term, underlying challenges created by poor governance and deepening poverty that feed such insecurity.

5. The Nigerian Police and Army should expand the scope and source of its intelligence that reflects full interagency cooperation and local involvement.

Conclusion

Banditry remains a major security challenge that is creating instability, hampered socio-economic development and undermined democratic governance in Nigeria. The need to reduce insecurity is urgent as a secure environment is attractive to growth and development in all ramifications. Given the observable shortcomings of the militarized responses to armed banditry, dialogue serves as a complement within a broader conflict management mechanism to address the threats.

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About the Author

Omale Caroline is a Research Assistant in the Directorate of Research and Policy Analysis in the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Abuja. Omale is also a Statistician and a Conflict Data Analyst in the institute.

Addressing Girl-Child Education Amid Insecurity in Northern Nigeria Through Virtual Classrooms

Andrew Danjuma Dewan, PhD

Abstract

This paper examines the dilemma of girl-child education amid insecurity in Northern Nigeria. The girl-child in Northern Nigeria is educationally disadvantaged by fact of her gender associated with deep-rooted religion and cultural practices in terms of access to education. Her predicament is further complicated by the sheer conspiracy of the Northern political and religious elite who use religion and tradition to deny her right to education. Boko Haram and bandits who are 'opposed' to Western education have made this scenario worse. Testament to their (Boko Haram) ideology of opposition to Western education, have abducted scores of schoolgirls (Chibok, Dapchi, Kagara, Jangebe, among others). Boko Haram and bandits are thwarting efforts by the United Nations (UN) towards inclusive and equitable quality education opportunities for all by 2030. This paper argues that, although insurgency makes not only the education of the girl-child grim, but National Targets, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets on education unattainable, even the UN Agenda for 2030 bleak. However, virtual learning opportunities provide the girl-child an alternative route out of the darkness cast on her future by insurgents. The paper further contends that the Federal Government, with effective collaboration of the affected states in the north, could make girl-child education and the goal of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) by 2030 a reality by exploring the opportunities in the virtual world. It also discusses how despite the coronavirus in the United Kingdom, which led to the shutdown of schools, learning did not stop because schools today transcend the physical structure. The paper submits that with the right policy framework, adequate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, the girl-child can still acquire education amid the cloud of insecurity in Northern Nigeria via virtual classrooms.

Keywords: Girl-child Education; Insecurity; Northern Nigeria; Virtual Classrooms; Development.

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) recognises the importance of quality education in improving the lives of mankind, thus, it has set an ambitious Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) four (4) with seven (7) clear achievable targets for education by 2030. Drawing from this, the African Union (AU) has set its own agenda tagged "Continental Education Strategy for Africa" (CESA) 2016-2025 aimed at making education the cornerstone of its development and making education the tool for a secure and peaceful Africa. On the education index in Nigeria, the Northern Region is the most backward and the girl-child is the one that appears left behind. Nigerian girls leave school earlier than the males and the country has the highest numbers of out of school children in the world (British Council Report, 2012).

Over the decades, the Northern Governments have focused on the education of their young people, especially the girl-child, by making education free as an incentive. Also, the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) is a deliberate strategy implemented to attract girl-child enrolment, retention, and completion of basic education (Ogamba, 2020). Although, this policy-decision, and strategies have seen a boost in the rates of girl-child enrolment, and completion in schools, especially in Bauchi, Jigawa, Sokoto, Niger, Katsina, and Zamfara states, the recent waves of abductions of students in some states in the North such as Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Niger, among others, have rolled back the gains made on girl-child education (Ogamba, 2020).

This paper examines the opportunities that exist in the domain of virtual classrooms for knowledge transfer that could be utilised for the education of the girl-child in Northern Nigeria. Rather than focus on 'school' in the conventional sense, attention should be on 'teaching' and 'learning' (Koelsch, 1995). Learning can take place anywhere and at any time, it does not have to be in a specific place, or indeed in a school. Given the atmosphere of insecurity, rape,

banditry, and abductions especially in the Northern part of the country, the education of young people, especially of the girl-child, should not end abruptly. The opportunities that the virtual classrooms offer should be leveraged upon to achieve the targets and goals of education.

In the Western World, where the coronavirus pandemic is ravaging their populations, learning has not stopped; learning is still taking place; children of all age grades are being taught through technologies like the virtual classrooms. Given the current trend insecurity has assumed in Nigeria, especially in the North and the governments' inability to bring this situation to an end, it may be argued that insecurity in Nigeria, like the coronavirus, is now a new normal that the Nigerian population has to come to term with. The support of government at all levels (federal, state, and local government) is needed to make virtual classrooms a reality in those states in Northern Nigeria that are currently the epicentres of abductions, rapes, and banditry. A lot is required which communities on their own cannot provide (funding, provision of ICT infrastructure, power supply, technical support, Internet Access, and availability of broadband connectivity), and so on. Through this revolution and transformation of learning, the UN's ambitious Goal four (4) for quality Education for Sustainable Development cum Global Citizenship Education (GCE) (UNESCO-IICBA, 2018) by 2030 could be achieved.

Conceptual Clarifications

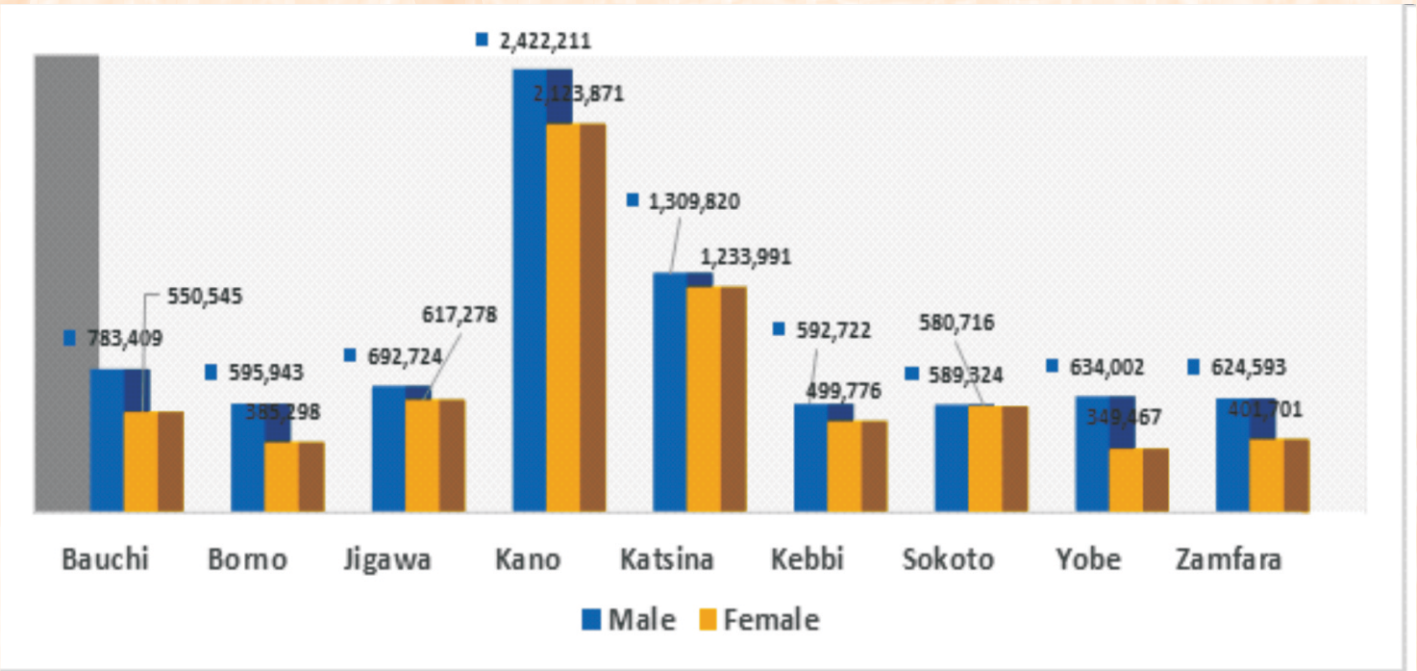
Virtual

The lexical item 'virtual' is used in computer science to refer to something 'whose existence is simulated with software rather than actually existing in a hardware or some physical form' (Hiltz, 1992, p. 188). According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, the concept 'virtual' has several meanings, but as it relates to computing, it means 'not physically existing as such but made by software to appear to do so' (p, 1565). In other words, the notion 'virtual' refers to something that is nearly true that for the most purposes can be true. When the word 'virtual' is used as an adjective it means 'in effect or essence, though not in fact or strict definition' (The Websters New English Dictionary and Thesaurus). Virtual can be used in several ways: virtual community, virtual office, virtual workplace, virtual meeting, virtual worship, virtual classroom, and so on (Koelsch, 1985; Rheingold, 1994; Campbell, 1999). 'Virtual' is in direct contrast with the idea of the 'real.' What this implies is that 'virtual' is something that has actual existence but not formally (Sherman & Judkins, 1992). In this age of the information superhighway, portable ICTs devices are defining and redefining banking, offices, schools, workplaces, and so on. The contemporary world belongs to the virtual world.

Girl-Child Education

The term 'girl-child' does not have a universal application or understanding; girl-child means different things to different people. For example, a 'girl-child' may be understood by some people to mean a child who has not attained the age of fourteen (14), or someone, a minor, who is yet to attain the age of eighteen (18) (Ada, 2007; Diocesan Policy, 2020). In other words, the girl-child is a young female who has the potentiality towards growing into a woman. At this period (0-18 years), she is under the protection of either her parents or guardian. As earlier observed, the girl-child's gender places certain limitations on her such as the right to education, which by the UN's declaration is a human right. Education, it must be stressed, is an important catalyst in the overall development of the human person, so much so that it is part of the UN agenda as well as other International and Regional Unions agendas for 2030 and 2060 respectively (UNESCO-IICBA, 2018). The power of education to transform persons and societies to become responsible citizens, without prejudice to gender, has since been recognised by one of UN's Agencies (UNICEF). Thus, it is noteworthy that governments, the world over, are determined that the girl-child is not left behind in this drive. Through the Universal Basic Education (UBE), and State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEB), the Nigerian Government, especially the governors of the affected Northern States, are working hard to push back the frontiers of endemic illiteracy in the region through multi-prong strategies. See Figure 1 below for details on the children in school (ages 6-11years), in some selected core Northern States.

Figure 1: Children in School (ages 6-11) in some selected core Northern States.



Source: UBEC (2018)

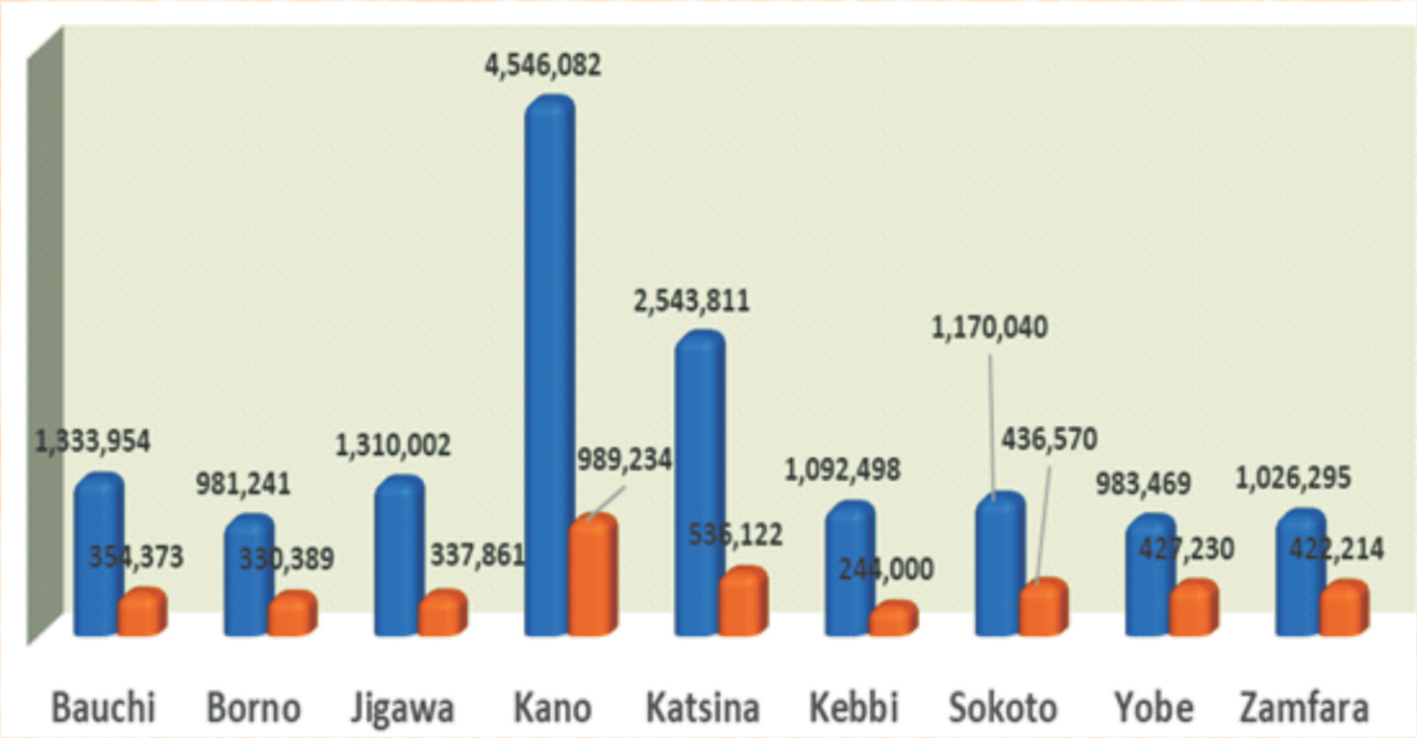
Theoretical Frameworks

This paper is premised on two conceptual theoretical frameworks, namely, the Uses and Gratification Theory and The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The basic philosophy of the Uses and Gratification theory is that the members of the media audience(s) use a medium or media for certain derivable rewards or gratifications. In other words, people do not just use a medium for the sake of it; no, it is always used to satisfy certain basic human needs. This theory is therefore consistent with Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (McQuail, 2020). As an audience-based theory, it avers that the members of the audience expose themselves to the mass media contents to fulfil one or more of their immediate needs. The theory further assumes that the media audience are active gratification seekers, interacting with the selected media that meet their specific needs (Daramola, 2003). People would give a large portion of their time to a technology based on the corresponding or greater proportion of gratification they would get from using them. In other words, the selection of a medium is contingent upon the satisfaction of the user's needs by the medium (Folarin, 1998; Blumler & McQuail, 1969).

As the frontiers of technologies are increasingly being expanded upon, the search for political information on web by researchers, for example, have also increased. Garramone, Harris and Anderson (1986), using this theory found surveillance to be the main reason for using computer bulletin board systems. These researchers contended that "self-efficacy predicts guidance and information seeking/surveillance as motivations for using the Internet to find political information" (Kaye & Johnson, 2002 cited in Agboola, 2013, p. 170).

The use of a virtual classroom by a student would depend on the intended benefits the student would get from using it. Virtual classrooms are so flexible and based on their customised applications, students would find them quite appealing and entertaining. Thus, the relevance of this theory in this paper lies in the fact that girl-child education in most core Northern States is being threatened due to the activities of bandits and insurgents like Boko Haram, the virtual classrooms can be deployed for the education of students in such communities without having to go far to school. In a region that ab initio has not given much premium to girl-child education due some religious and cultural beliefs, there is need to prioritise other alternatives to learning. Virtual classroom technology which is shaping the nature of 'school' today can be a veritable alternative. See Figure 2 and the analysis of In and Out School Children, ages 6-11 years in the same core Northern States as in Figure 1.

Figure 2: Analysis of In and Out of School Children (ages 6-11 years)



Source: UBEC (2018)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), one of the theories deployed in this paper was developed by Fred Davis in 1986. According to Davis (1993), the theory explains why people accept a technology. The reasons he put forward for this acceptance of an innovation are three-fold, namely, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and attitude towards the technology. Davis contends that a person's disposition towards a new device design system is dependent on the extent of the advantages that come with using the technology. In other words, it is about how flawless and easy to use the technology. Another tenet of the model is that the disposition of a person towards a technology or device would determine the extent of the use of the machine. If a device is user-friendly, the more users would be incentivised to use it. This explains why today a lot of inventions come with in-built entertainments such as games, music, movies, among others (Shin, 2009).

This theory is relevant to this study because it explains how technologies are embraced by especially young people in Nigeria. Most virtual classrooms are interactive which users, especially students would not only find friendly, but appealing. The students in Northern Nigeria who are out of school, on account of insurgents who may have thought going back to school was impossible, would find learning through virtual classrooms a welcome development.

Girl-Child Education in the North: A Context

Critical stakeholders in Nigeria, especially in the Northern part, are concerned about the state of girl-child education. The history of educational development in Northern Nigeria has catalogued how Islamic Education had existed in the North long before the advent of the Christian missionaries who were credited with the establishment of schools in Badagry and Abeokuta in Southern Nigeria between 1842-1914 (Fafunwa, 2004; Ifejeh & Osayande, 2011). It is also noteworthy that historically, Muslims have excelled in the fields of arts, science, and mathematics in the 15th century. However, along the way, Muslims began to retrogress with regards to Western education. What is today known as Western Education in Nigeria is, largely, due to the efforts of the early Christian missionaries. Perhaps, because of the fear by Muslims and their leaders, that if one attended a mission school, one had to convert to Christianity, school enrolments have not been encouraging. Emirs especially discouraged their followers from sending their children to those mission schools (Fafunwa, 2004).

The reason, as already noted above, for the refusal of Muslims in the North to enrol their children in schools was the fear of proselytization, but over a century later, the situation has not changed significantly. The reality is that the twin factors of religion and tradition have conspired in the unfair treatment of the girl-child as it relates to education. Although in so many Nigerian societies the belief that women are second class citizens prevails, it is even much more so in the North (Enejere, 1991). The Northern Region is steeped in religious, traditional as well as cultural practices that hinder the girl-child's access to education and other development benefits. The prioritisation of the education of the boy-child over the girl-child in some urban and rural Nigerian communities has accounted for the low enrolment of the girl-child in school (Ada, 1992; UNESCO-IICBA, 2018).

Due to the gender disparity of religion and cultural beliefs, some scholars (Michael, 2011; Ocho, 2005; Offorma, 2009) have painted some dire consequences of denying the girl-child access to education, among others. According to them, hindering the education of the girl-child does not only render her vulnerable, but makes her the most dysfunctional member of the human society. Other International groups that have raised similar alarm includes Action Aid International (AAIN) as cited in KIKI (2010) when it alleged that before now, in a school of 150 students in Northern Nigeria, for example, only an alarmingly 2-3 students are girls. Tragically, the North has not realised that 'the failure of education is the root of vandalism, insurgency, terrorism, lawlessness, poverty and acts of irresponsibility being witnessed in Northern Nigeria today. Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive, easy to govern, but impossible to enslave' (Omojuwa, Ofulue., & Chidinma, 2008, p. 58).

The Prophet Muhammed is known to have advised his followers thus 'Seek knowledge even unto China.' China today, as it was then, is not a Muslim country. So, if the Prophet admonished his followers to seek knowledge, even in China, it implies that he was not referring to only religious knowledge. Why then are Muslims, especially the Northern Nigerian Muslims, sceptical of Western education? Learning in Islam, according to Omojuwa *et al* (2008), was obligatory for both men and women to the extent that some women even rose to the position of being lecturers. The problem now, as Omojuwa and his colleagues opined, is that 'culture has been mixed with Islam and women have been restricted, and some people even feel they should not be educated at all' (p. 59).

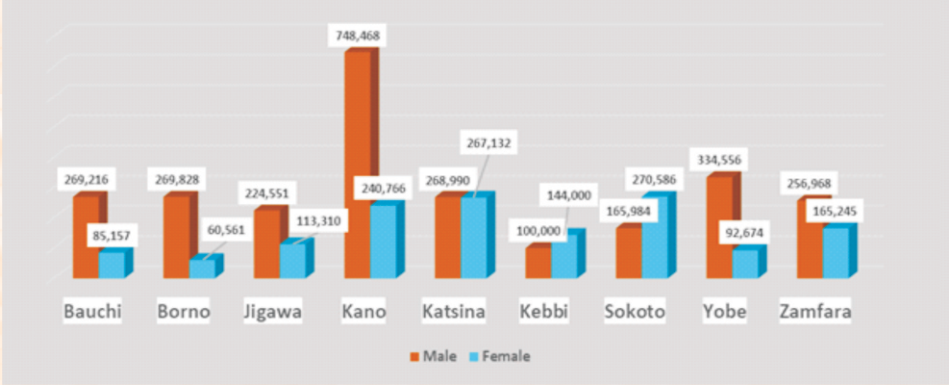
Insecurity in Northern Nigeria and the State of the Girl-Child Education

Earlier, the grim state of girl-child education in Northern Nigeria was discussed. The situation of insecurity in Nigeria, especially in the North, as occasioned by the activities of Bandits, Boko Haram, and other insurgents, are in a way, putting nails on the coffin of girl-child education in Northern Nigeria. In the last five to six years, hundreds of schoolboys and girls have been abducted by these criminal elements to discourage education. Despite the security efforts being mobilised and deployed at all levels by the Nigerian government, there seem to be no respite in sight, yet. It is a known fact that:

> Nigeria is plagued with perennial security challenges as the organised crime, violent extremism, ethno-religious violence that could have been easily prevented through a genuine process of reconciliation, political accountability, and the elimination of the culture of impunity (Kukah Centre, 2018, p. 3).

See Figure 3 for the numbers of Out of School Children per Northern States as indicated below.

Figure 3: Out of School Children per Northern States



Source: UBEC (2018)

In a region where hitherto girl-child education was already a problem, the activities of Bandits and insurgents have made the situation much worst. The newspaper headlines sampled below tell the story of the frustrations of, especially parents at the continued spade of abductions of their wards. See Tables 1 and 2 on the way the angers of parents were reported in the *Sun* newspaper.



Table 1: (Source, Saturday Sun, 2021)

Table 2 below reports the trauma of some of the abducted school children



Table 2 (Source: Leadership, 2021

Table 3 below by Saturday Independent also carried the story on the threats of the schoolgirls being married off by the insurgents.


Obasanjo Says He Tested Positive For COVID-19 Once, Blames Trump For The Spread Of Virus

You Have Short Time To Prove Your Mettle, Buhari Tells Service Chiefs

Why IGP Is Yet To Redeploy Former EFCC Chair, Magu

SATURDAY INDEPENDENT

THE MOST READ NEWSPAPER AMONG THE POLITICAL AND BUSINESS ELITE

VOL. 19 NO. 267 MARCH 6, 2021 N200

Rising Abduction Of School Children Seen Spiking Rate Of Child Marriages

North-West Accounts For 30% Out-Of-School Children —UN

School Abductions, Dangerous, Condemnable, Barbaric — Educationist

Why I Wanted To Kill My Husband, Woman Confesses

LG Election: Makinde's Close Ally Behind PDP Crisis, Chairmen Allege

I Won't Take Any COVID-19 Vaccine — Yahaya Bello

Tiger Woods Didn't Remember Driving On Day Of Crash

Sunmbo Adeoye, Crushing The Status Quo

North's Blockade Of Food, Lesson To South West Stakeholders —Gani Adams

Source (Saturday Independent, 2021)

In a report by the UNICEF, it contends that, beyond the fact that these abductions are discouraging parents from sending their children to school, they are responsible for the rising cases of girl-child marriages and other vulnerable situations (Saturday *Independent*, 2021). The situation of insecurity and abduction of school children by bandits and so on, are helping to fulfil one of Boko Haram's goals, which is that 'Western education' is 'forbidden' or 'prohibited' (Yusha'u, 2012). In 2020, the coronavirus pandemic caused a massive disruption in education worldwide. Today, in Nigeria, in addition to the coronavirus problem, insecurity is another disruptive force that is rolling back the considerable gains that have been made on girl-child education in Northern Nigeria. These situations have constituted drawbacks to National Goals (the UN's and the AU's efforts) to achieve Sustainable Development Goals of which education is the cornerstone (UNESCO-IICBA, 2018).

With these disturbing conditions of insecurity, especially in the Northern parts of Nigeria that is hindering a sizeable percentage of the population (girl-child) from attending schools, the Nigerian Government, critical stakeholders, as well as none-state actors need to seriously work towards investing in the opportunities that the Information and Communication Technologies presents to humanity today. This is because all is not doom and gloom if the government and all the stakeholders make this a national imperative (Koelsch, 1985).

Addressing Girl-Child Education in Northern Nigeria Through Virtual Classroom

Curran (2000, p. 120) was apt when he opined that 'new times call for new thinking.' The disruptions that insecurity has continued to cause to the education of the girl-child in Northern Nigeria calls for a new and concerted approach to education. Understanding the forces that are shaping and organising our lives in the global world, of which Nigeria is a part of, is the dawning of controlling those forces, rather than 'feeling helplessly adrift in a sea of change' (Koelsch, p. x).

Virtual reality is transforming the global space in various ways: the way we worship, conduct business, shop, do conferences, do meetings, do sports, entertainment, and so on. Education is no exception to the transformative power of the virtual reality. Although virtual reality is not infallible, it has its own limitations like other innovations, but they can still improve education. It is because we are all part of the global village that the UN is committed to this important project of Global Citizenship Education (GCED).

Virtual reality, as Koelsch (1985, p. 313) has argued, makes 'people believe they are somewhere they are not.' The unceasing technological advances being witnessed today requires young people of all nations to build up their competencies in a high-tech global space. Although there are many other competencies that may determine a country's success in the global arena, if upskilling of the young population and dedication are missing, it would have a significant negative effect on the rest.

The religious and cultural dispositions of the core Northerners, as discussed earlier, are preventing the introduction of technological innovations in their schools. Concerned about the backwardness of young school-going children in the North, Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah, with the support of a Spanish friend, provided hundreds of laptops that was aimed at mitigating the educational deficit in the region. This initiative which had the support of key Northern religious leaders like the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar 111, the former Emir of Kano, Muhammad Sanusi II and some few other notable Norther politicians was politicised and in the end the initiative was abandoned. Bishop Kukah was accused by some Northern and Southern Muslim elite of embarking on a clandestine attempt to convert young Muslim students to Christianity. It was because of former Emir Sanusi Lamido Sanusi's opposition to some of the practices in the North such as child marriages, the *Almajiri* system of education, and other such practices which have kept these children perpetually poor, and worse off that Governor Abdullahi Ganduje of Kano dethroned him (Egbas, 2020).

The vast forest of opportunities inherent in the modern communication technology are not lost on the world of religion, for example. One could not agree more with Fore (1999, p. 21) when he said that 'The only way religion can find expression in the contemporary world is through the media.' Fore warns that, given the powers aggregated in the media of communication, unless churches, mosques, synagogues, and so on, embrace these technological opportunities at their disposal, their only alternatives are accommodation or withdrawal from those opportunities into enclaves as close to the world as a 12th century monastery. The revolution that the Internet has brought has allowed societies and communities with access to leverage on the affordances of its resources for both teaching and learning and by so doing, advanced the socio-economic fortunes of those communities and societies.

In a study by Sule *et al* (2020), in Dungun, a rural community in Kanke Local Government Area of Plateau State, entitled 'Enhancing Education in the Rural Community through Online Training,' it produced an interesting life-changing educational results on the participants. With support from the University of Jos (one of the flagship universities in Nigeria, and a leading Information and Communication Technology hub), the pilot project was a huge success. From their array of computer resources that had been supported for a period of ten years by the Andrew Carnegie foundation, Sule *et al* (2020) were able to deploy ICT tools and modules, Open-Source Learning Management System, among others, for teaching and learning. The Moodle platforms were used to administer examination and tests for students. Due to the flexibility of the Moodle, they allowed lecturers to post their lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations are stored in the University Moodle site. Furthermore, course lecturers can seamlessly delivered their lectures through video conference (such as Google Classrooms, Zoom and Microsoft Teams) in real time to the students who were connected but scattered across different geographical locations in Dungun, while the lecturers were in a class physically or at some other locations.

Deploying this innovation, as Sule and colleagues did, allowed students to join their peers in real time with adequate provision to participate remotely. This technology can be customised to suit students everywhere, including Zamfara, Katsina, Niger, Kaduna, Yobe, Borno, and so on, whose schools have been ravaged by insurgents to participate in learning virtually through this technology. Such customised apps, as Sule *et al* have contended, is capable of meeting the educational and other needs of students who are unable to attend school either due to insecurity or the coronavirus pandemic that has led to lockdown is some communities. For example, such customised applications can be used to teach girls at home subjects like mathematics, English, and other subjects, through cooking recipes, among others.

Conclusion

Education is not only the foundation but the cornerstone of any society. In a high-tech-driven global society, such as ours, and in a rapidly changing and ever more complex world, a country's ability to compete in this space rests solely on the skills and dedication of its citizens (Koelsch, 1995). Children, especially in Europe, America, Asia, and so on, are showing much receptivity to new educational technology being presented today. These are the opportunities countries are leveraging on for their young people; these are also the opportunities the Nigerian Government is promoting for the country's young generation. But tragically, the educational future of the younger generation in Nigeria, especially the ones in the Northern part are being threatened by not just religious and cultural practices, but crucially, by the activities of Bandits and Boko Haram elements. These threats must be strongly challenged because the danger of not arresting these maladies for the future of the country is better not imagined.

While the Nigerian political leaders and the security network of the country are trying to contend these violent episodes of mass abductions of students, stakeholders in the education sector and outside, must have to think outside the box. Most countries in the Western World are still under lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, but learning is still taking place using various technological platforms (Microsoft/Google Zoom, and so on). The advent of networked computers is enabling families, students, teachers as well as administrators to rethink the nature and concept 'school.' The introduction of network computers has brought about a paradigm shift; rather than focus on school, attention is now shifted to teaching and learning. It is worth noting that learning can happen anywhere, it does not have to be in school (Koelsch, 1995).

Virtual classrooms offer considerable level of flexibility because they allow users to customise their applications to suit their specific educational needs. Students are less likely to be bored from learning in an interactive high-tech virtual classroom environment. The girl-child in Northern Nigeria whose education hangs in a balance due to daily abductions could have a future through the virtual classroom platform. Students are different in many ways: they have different academic aptitudes and learn at different rates. This makes it difficult for teachers to offer students individualised attention in any meaningful way. Technologies like the virtual classrooms can assist lecturers to pay much attention to individual students, regarding what they are learning as well as their levels of progress (Koelsch, 1995).

Ensuring adequate coverage of virtual classrooms in the communities affected by insecurity in Northern Nigeria will come at a huge cost. The Nigerian Government and all state, and non-state actors in the country, must find ways of appropriating these virtual classroom opportunities. Beyond articulating the necessary framework for the virtual classroom project, the Nigerian Government and stakeholders must commit themselves to the provision of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructures by ensuring the following: funding, bandwidth subscription, stable power supply, upskilling of human resources, Internet connectivity, and security, among others (Sule *et al*, 2020). Already, the Northern Region has the unenviable credential of having over ten (10) million out of school children in the world (Uwaezuoke, 2019). Anything that would add to these numbers of out of school children would be a ticking bomb.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions in this paper, the following recommendations are made:

1. Governments at all levels in Nigeria need to prioritise Information and Communication Technology infrastructures in all public schools. In view of the protracted conflicts and banditry that have overwhelmed the core North, student's education, which is vital for nation-building, should not be allowed to end abruptly by exploring the virtual classroom options.
2. The upskilling, training, and retraining of teachers must be an on-going project to get the full complement of the virtual classroom technology.
3. Schools and their host communities should be safeguarded to prevent attacks by Boko Haram and bandits who have made the abductions of students and destruction of schools a cardinal goal.
4. Media advocacy on the role of education as catalyst for youth as well as national

development should be embarked upon to reorientate parents and critical stakeholders in the North on the importance of Western education in the contemporary world.

5. For the virtual classroom project to materialised, the governments at all levels (federal, state, and local) must commit financial resources toward it. Without adequate funding, this project is not going to get off the ground, because ICT is capital intensive.

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About the Author

Andrew Danjuma Dewan, PhD is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Mass Communication, Plateau State University, Bokkos. He is an experienced lecturer and has lectured at Plateau State University over in the field of Mass for over fourteen years. His research interest, includes media, religion, ethnicity and conflict; Human Rights Journalism; Crisis & Emergency Risk Communication; and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Dr Dewan has contributed in several reputable international and local journals, as well as Book Chapters. He was the Editor-In-Chief of the *Word of Life* newspaper of the Catholic Archdiocese of Jos. He has travelled to several countries around the world. He is currently, the Director, Advancement, Linkages, and Strategic Partnerships of Plateau State University, Bokkos. He enjoys reading, intellectual discourse, playing basketball and golf.

The Utility of Early Warning System and Crime Prevention: A Study of the Abduction of School Children in Nigeria

Steve Ogwu Agbo

ABSTRACT

This paper interrogates how a crime early warning system could help prevent the abduction of school children in Nigeria. This is essential for interrogation, as the abduction of school children has become a threat to national security. The paper used qualitative data from secondary literature and conceptualized theories of early warning signs to provide a theoretical base for its argument. The paper revealed that the abduction of school children in Nigeria could have been prevented with intelligence gathering and applying of crime prevention mechanism through early warning signs. It argued that an early warning system is designed for the identification of crime chronic hot spots and/or temporary hot spot. This paper has established abduction of school children in Nigeria is a threat to national security. It is preventable with the aid of Early Warning System, which could be categorized into temporary hot, hot spots or chronic hot spot. The combined hot spot programme first allocates resources to chronic hot spots up to a maximum size in the area and then applies the EWS to remaining areas outside of the chronic hotspots, optimizing over grid sizes and rule thresholds. This submission differs from previous studies, which mostly and primarily advocated for the use of chronic hot spots for crime prevention. But this paper is of the view that a combination of temporary spots, hot spots and chronic hot spots are essential recipes for intelligence gathering in the prevention of abduction of school children in Nigeria.

Keywords: early, warning, crime, prevention, abduction, and school.

Introduction

The abduction of school children has become a threat to national security and educational development in northern Nigeria. Gathering of intelligence and applying of crime prevention mechanism through early warning signs could have prevented it. An early warning system is designed for the identification of crime chronic hot spots or/ and temporary hot spots. Scholars such as Grubesic (2006); Braga and Weisburd (2010); Braga (2012) has offered several definitions of crime hot spots. On his part, Sherman (1995) defined crime hot spots as small places in which the occurrence of crime is so frequent that it is highly predictable, at least, over one year. About duration, Weisburd (2004) used trajectory analysis with annual data to show that crime hot spots in Seattle made up of block-long street segments can persist for many years, even more than a decade. These can be termed ''chronic hot spots.'' The practical implication for police decision-making is that chronic hot spots are constant and, therefore, suitable targets for crime prevention efforts. All that is needed is to determine the street segments or boundaries of chronic hot spots and then to assign prevention resources to them over the long term. Wilcox and Eck's (2011) ''iron law of troublesome places'' assures a constant series of crimes in such places come to mind in this conceptualization.

In their studies on community vulnerability, environmental risk and regional infrastructure, Grubesic (2006); Braga and Weisburd (2010); Braga (2012) and Sherman (1995) did not conclude in their submission if a hot spot identified by early warning system (EWS) for managing temporary hot spots could include rules for, detecting the start or flare-up of a temporary hot spot. Or such prediction is persistence of crimes. Such is the basis upon which this study will interrogate the nexus between the crime early warning system and the abduction of school children in Nigeria. This conceptual premise is necessary and pertinent in crime prevention literature because Ochoga (2021) argues that crime prevention is a premised effective and proactive early warning system. This research allied with this submission because he used early warning system and crime as independent and dependent variables to calibrate, investigate, and compare the performance of chronic, EWS, and combined chronic

and EWS hot spot programmes. Though he did not use modern crime mapping and CompStat approaches for tactical deployment of police, putting ''cops on the dots,'' it has not had either sustained or centralized hot spot programs during the study period to justify his claims.

Even Olligschlaeger's (1998) study that assessed the potential for preventing crimes beyond current good policing practices did not focus on the nexus between EWS and exposing hot spot prevention efforts in crime prevention. This conceptual angle is necessary to be interrogated because the status of hot spot policing in Nigeria and this is fundamental and interesting in crime and security literature as indices of confirmed cases of crime are threatened. Too, Olligschlaeger's (1998) study did not explain whether authorities use hot spot programs rests to prevent crime and enhance security. This gap is interesting to be filled because intensive hot spot policing may be a recipe to prevent kidnapping of school children in Nigeria. It is against the conceptual premise that this paper sought to interrogate the utilities of the application variants of EWS in the prevention of abduction of school children in Nigeria.

Conceptual and Theoretical Underpinnings

For crime hot spots, Grubesic (2006); Braga and Weisburd (2010); Braga (2012); Sherman (1995), Ochoga (2021) and other scholars have suggested crime hot spots as targets for crime prevention by police because of their high crime density and stability over long periods. Sherman (2020) found that about 3 % of street addresses produced over 50 % of service calls to police officers in Minneapolis. Spelman (1995) found a large number of police service calls concentrated in high-risk places such as high schools, subway stations, and parks in Boston for a relatively long period. Weisburd (2004) found that 5 % of block-long street segments accounted for 50 % of crime in Seattle and the hottest hot spots chronically persisted longer than a decade. Recently, Braga et al. (2010) found that about 5 % of street units (e.g., street segments and cross-streets) accounted for 74 % of gun crimes in Boston from 1980 through 2008. Ochoga (2021) found that only 1 % of street units generated about 50 % of commercial robberies during a 29-year (1980–2008) study period. Wilcox and Eck (2011) coined a term for the concentration of crime in very few dangerous places as ''The Iron Law of Troublesome Places.''

One criticism of police interventions in crime hot spots has been the possibility that criminals and their crimes merely displace to other locations, often nearby. There had been mixed literature on crime displacement (Reppetto 1976; Miethe 1991; Scherdin 1986; Ochoga. 2021; Clarke and Weisburd 1994; Hesseling 1995; Ratcliffe et al. 2011). More recently, however, Weisburd (2019) found that certain crime illegal drug dealing and prostitution do not readily displace and thus benefit from prevention efforts. Moreover, Ochoga (2021) concluded that policing hot spots not only has a moderate effect size in reducing crime but also a diffusion of benefits (crime reduction) in contiguous areas rather than crime displacement. If displacement of crime exists, EWS would respond to it while chronic hot spots would not. Both crime prevention at chronic and EWS hot spots could enjoy a diffusion of benefits.

Another important finding from Ochoga (2021) was the impact of police hot spot programmes on community members. Regardless of the early critiques by Ochoga (2021) on the efficacy of EWS, the skepticism surrounding the effectiveness of hot spot policing tactics was argued by Tonry (2011). He asserts that there is no alternative to EWS for prevention enterprise other than intelligence gathering and it is the function of EWS. Ochoga (2012) recommendations he submits that a key policy of any hot spot programme should be that field officers build positive relationships with citizens responding to crimes that have occurred and working to prevent future crimes. This line of thought underscores the practical utility of EWS in crime and security litterateur.

Paralleling the development of hot spot policing has been the development of methods for automatically estimating hot spot boundaries, including point mapping (Jefferis 1999), spatial ellipses (Block 1995; Levine 2013), thematic mapping (Harries 1999), grid-system maps (Chainey and Ratcliffe 2005), and surface smoothing methods Chainey (2021); McGuire and Williamson (1999); Gorr and Lee (2021). Although this literature argued and made a case for the importance of hot spots in crime prevention none of them use one of the

commonly used surface smoothing methods is kernel density smoothing (KDS) which is a simple non-parametric method that estimates crime density (crimes per unit area) to expatiate your claims. Even Haining (2012) and Chainey (2008) generated hot spots using alternative mapping techniques and compared them based on the persistence of crimes established if the EWS prevents and reduce crime in hot spots. This is conceptual that this study stands differently from this previous literature.

With temporary crime hot spots, Mohler et al. (2011) provide a method that models and simultaneously estimates both short-term and long-term crime hot spots using a marked point process. Their model, however, does not identify or distinguish chronic hot spots versus temporary hot spots. Instead, they compute a total crime density for grid cells, summing long-term average and short-term flare-up contributions. They recommend ranking all grid cells daily and allocating the top x % for police prevention work depending on resources. Gorr and Lee (2021) defined temporary hot spots as areas with crime densities (crimes per unit area per period estimated using KDS) that are comparable to chronic hot spots but typically persist for periods less than a year months. Temporary hot spots flare up, persist, extinguish, and can reoccur.

Gorr and Lee found chronic hot spots to be relatively few and concentrated in commercial and poverty-stricken areas of Pittsburgh while temporary hot spots are smaller in area, greater, and widely dispersed across the city. Craglia (2000) shared the same line of thought with Mohler (2011) and Gorr and Lee (2021) when they pointed out the importance of different crime prevention responses under differences in neighbourhood characteristics and offender, victimization, and incident rates across neighbourhoods. For example, an urban area with high offence rates requires long-term policing tactics to reduce crime, while a residential area with a low offence rate but relatively high victimization needs more sophisticated approaches, such as dynamic, proactive policing. In this vein, temporary hot spots can be potential targets, besides chronic hot spots, for the police if the temporary hot spots persist long enough after initial detection for police to prevent crimes or can be forecasted in advance.

This paper shows that early detection is promising. Forecasting crime flare-ups is more challenging and this is the premise upon which the paper differs from previous studies. In EWS, Chronic to temporary hot spots define a spectrum of cases from always hot, to mostly hot, to sometimes hot. The works of Craglia (2000), Mohler (2011) and Gorr and Lee (2021) are silent. But this study finds it interrogative because it provides evidence that, depending on where the line is drawn to define chronic hot spots, some designated chronic hot spots or their parts may exhibit the on-and-off behaviour of temporary hot spots and thus may benefit from a dynamic pattern of police resource allocation for prevention. This segment reviews theory for temporary hot spots: near repeat crimes, routine activity theory, hardening of soft crimes, and relocation of poor populations. Near Repeat Crimes Morgan (2001), Townsley et al. (2003), Johnson and Bowers (2004a, b) found ''near repeat'' burglaries in their studies. To them, residences near an initial burglary were more likely to be targeted for burglaries soon afterwards than otherwise expected. Also, near-repeat burglaries are more prevalent than repeat burglaries at the same location. Similar to the crime preventive benefit of focusing on repeat victims (Pease, 1998), focusing on particular dwellings at or nearby the initial burglary could also predict and prevent future crimes. Johnson and Bowers (2004a) found that properties within 400 metres on an initial burglary suffered from the elevated risk of burglaries 400 for months after the initial burglary. For burglaries in a portion of Los Angeles, Mohler et al. (2011) estimated areas of elevated risk to be 50–100 metres. Ratcliffe and Rengert (2008) studied near-repeat patterns of shootings. Their study shows that near-repeat shootings typically occurred within 400 feet from an initial shooting within a few weeks. They reasoned that the near-repeat shootings were retaliation between offenders and victims.

Also, disputes arising from illegal activities such as drug dealing can cause near repeats. Here, shootings may be the most certain and swiftest means to punish another given that criminals cannot report crimes they suffer to the police. If legitimate means, such as law enforcement, were available, offenders would not have to retaliate. Another possibility is retaliation gang shootings (Cohen and Tita 1999; Tita and Ridgeway 2007). Initial shootings between the rival gangs trigger not only serial shootings, but also other types of violent acts. Repeat victimization theories (Jacobs et al. 2000) and near-repeat phenomena with

location can explain this case. In sum, near-repeat criminal behaviour is one theory that leads to temporary crime hot spots. This theory appears, however, to only pertain to limited crime types: burglary, gang-related violence, and shootings. It may be extended to other crime types, for example, aggravated assault and homicide, as the result of shootings. It also may pertain to the certain criminals, for example, gang members who seek revenge from recent acts of violence even abduction of school children. This is because kidnapping of school children is a crime against humanity and it occurrence in northern Nigeria poses question to the capability of the intelligence community to prevent future occurrence hence it has become a routine activity (occurrence phenomena) with its attendants security challenges.

This is why the paper adopts the Routine activity theory as popularized by Cohen and Felson (1979), Felson (1986), Sherman et al. (1989b), Eck (1994). To this theory, occurrence phenomena of violence or crime such as the abduction of school children have the tendency to change among the three necessary elements—potential victim (suitable target), motivated offender, and capable guardianship—can either deter or provoke crime. To the theory, if a motivated offender finds a suitable target with no situational barrier that increases the risk of being arrested, the likelihood of the offender committing crimes will increase. Crime-prone places like the schools in northern Nigeria provide potential offenders with a higher opportunity to be involved in criminal acts due to the lack of guardianship and the existence of potential victims such as defenseless Nigerian school children.

Thus, the above scenario needs to and/or by eliminating the opportunity that a crime-prone location like schools offers to motivated offenders and police and other security agencies can reduce the likelihood of crime before it happens or reduce the opportunity of repeated occurrence of crime. This argument implies that proactive policing could achieve this goal by increasing police officers or increasing the frequency of police patrol in crime-prone locations. Once special police resources are removed from such locations, however, crimes can start up again after criminals perceive the changed circumstances in schools in northern Nigeria. Thus on and off behaviour of crime hot spots like schools in the region can be caused by police, location managers, and other involved persons affecting the target/offender/guardianship situations of locations. This is the analytical angle that this theory aids this paper to advance a conceptual position that soft crimes leads to certain criminal behaviours and as such, it suggests that an increase in certain lesser crimes in a small geographic area may lead to an increase in serious crimes later in that area like schools in northern Nigeria. Empirical research has borne this possibility out, giving rise to an additional theory for temporary hot spots. Contributing to this development is that criminals are generalists, committing a wide range of disorder and crime types (e.g., Blumstein et al. 1988; Piquero 2000; DeLisi 2001).

This analytical position suggests that criminals rarely travel far from their residences to commit crimes (e.g., Rengert et al. 1999). So if there is a new criminal element in a neighbourhood, say because of new gang activity or release of a prisoner from jail, we expect to have a variety of crime types occurring in a relatively small area like schools. Disorderly behaviour and lesser crimes are much more prevalent than serious violent crimes; hence, by chance alone, one would expect to experience lesser crimes first and serious violent crimes later by a specific group of criminals. This theory suggests that crime hardens over time as neighbourhoods decay, and can occur over a variety of time scales including short time intervals. A test of this theory is to determine if large increases in soft crime in small areas lead to large increases in hard crimes in the same areas like schools. To this end, Cohen et al. (2007) and Gorr (2009) developed and tested a leading-indicator forecast model to forecast serious property and violent crimes from time-lagged soft crimes. This is the theoretical premise that this paper is adopting this theory as a theoretical base to study the utility of early warning system and crime prevention using A Study of the Abduction of school children in Nigeria.

Early Warning System: Detection and Forecasting of Abduction of School Children

Forecasting the on-and-off behaviour of temporary crime hot spots, when they start and end, would be highly desirable for efficient prevention of abduction of school children by police. So far

forecasting the timing of changes in time series has not been addressed adequately in the literature, although there are literature on detecting and forecasting the start of crime flare-ups. The great majority of demand forecasting methods use space and time series data with fixed service or product categories (crime types in this case), fixed time increments (e.g., days, weeks, months, quarters, etc.), and fixed spatial units (e.g., service or sales territories, census tracts, etc.). A disadvantage of such data, relative to temporary hot spots, is that some abduction of school children can occur across boundaries of fixed units and therefore be missed.

For example, a crime flare-up might be split between adjacent grid cells and, while not detected as tabulated, would be detected in a new, custom area unit that combines affected portions of areas from the adjacent cells. The same is possible for a flare-up split across sequential time intervals. Some methods exist that build custom spatial units, such as Corcoran, et al. (2003) and the spatial scan statistic (Neill and Gorr, 2007). The latter assembles the best set of custom area units from small, ''atom'' units, such as blocks, searching over all subsets of atom units. Recent results make the spatial scan statistics computationally workable for many applications (Neill 2009). Each time new data is available, the analyst is confronted with having to create new custom observation units to communicate to field officers, the computational burden is large, and as yet there is no empirical validation that such methods are accurate enough for the abduction of school children prevention work.

Space and time-series data of temporary hot spots is best characterized as ''intermittent.'' Intermittent time series data have very low demand (such as demand for spare aircraft parts) or are tabulated at such a fine-grained level, that there are many zeros in the time series data with occasional positive demand points, often clustered in time (Croston 1972; Regattieri et al. 2005). The intermittent time series forecasting literature, however, is exclusively devoted to inventory management policies and estimation of optimal safety stocks in order quantities to minimize inventory holding costs. The objective is to have enough stock on hand to meet demand with a fairly high probability, given a run with positive demand, while at the same time not having excessive stocks. Thus, while the models in this area include estimation of separate parameters for arrival time and demand level distributions, they are not concerned with precise timings of demands or durations of runs. All that is needed is enough stock on hand to meet demand, and that is assured at a high probability by optimizing the safety stock to prevent the abduction of school children in Nigeria. The temporary crime hot spot problem, however, is concerned with precise timing start-up and stopping time points so that police resources for crime prevention are not wasted. The intermittent forecast method in the literature does apply to temporary hot spots and the abduction of school children. And as such, crime prevention framework could be used in Nigeria's circumstances.

The great majority of time series models and methods are for regular (non-intermittent) data, meaning that almost every observation has a positive magnitude. The greatest number of time series forecasting papers is on extrapolative methods that merely extend experienced time trends and seasonal adjustments into the future to prevent the abduction of school children. The temporary hot spot/ intermittent forecast problem couldn't be forecasted by extrapolation in the issues of abduction of school children. Before positive demand forecasts are biased low (zero) and after a demand point they biased high (positive when the demand is again. Smaller time-series literature is devoted to models that are ''causal'' in the sense that they are multivariate with independent variables. Causal forecast models using lesser crimes as leading indicators of serious crimes have had some success (Cohen et al. 2007; Gorr 2009).

If leading indicator crimes such as the abduction of school children have recently had a large step increase in a spatial unit, then serious violent crimes as the abduction of school children will probably have a near-term future increase in the spatial unit. While these models are much better than chance decisions, they have relatively high false-positive rates. A further limitation of such models is that they require relatively large spatial units (e.g., census tracts) to have accurate estimates of model coefficients, while crime hot spots generally are much smaller, on the order of blocks. Given a leading-indicator forecast of a crime flare up like abduction of school children, crime analysts must then use expertise, crime mapping, field intelligence, etc. to determine where exactly and if to intervene within the larger area flagged.

Abduction of school children could be preventable by accurate forecasting. Time-series monitoring methods. Brown (1959,1963); Trigg (1964); McClain (1988); Cohen et al. (2009) provide an alternative to time series forecasting. These methods have the aim of detecting an unexpected, large change in time series data as soon as possible. They are based on decision rules analogous to hypothesis testing using a test statistic based on departures from extrapolative forecasts. A large, one-step-ahead forecast error (or series of errors of the same sign) provides evidence of a departure from ''business as usual.'' For the abduction of school children in Nigeria, time-series monitoring is more accurate than time series forecasting (having higher true positive rates for given false-positive rates) but at the cost that initially detected abduction of school children should have been prevented by application and utilization of the crime-spots.

In contrast, if it were possible to accurately forecast a temporary hot spot, then the initial abduction of school children or abduction of school students could also be exposed to prevention. Also, as with leading indicator forecasts, the crime analyst must use additional information and expertise to pinpoint locations within larger area units monitored. Time-series monitoring is promising because of their relatively high true positive rates for given false-positive rates (compared to forecasting). For example, CrimeStat IV (Levine 2013) implements time series monitoring for crime space and time-series data, based on Cohen et al. (2009). In summary, none of the existing time series models and methods meets the needs of temporary hot spot management by police for the abduction of school children prevention. Detection appears to be the only workable approach to managing temporary hot spots in an EWS at the spatial scale of multiple blocks in the prevention of abduction of school children in Nigeria.

Suggestions to Prevent Abduction of School Children in Nigeria

Based on the findings, the paper is of the view that crime is by no means mysterious but behaviour that is exhibited in the society by rational thoughts and often committed with underlined pattern of interaction. Thus, the onus is on the security agencies to device crime prevention strategies to forestall its occurrence. Therefore, the utilization of crime prevention frameworks such as the crime-soft-spot, crime-temporary-spot, crime-hot-spot, and crime-chronic-spot are recipes for preventing abduction of school children in Nigeria. A combination of these frameworks is necessary in the context of debilitating abduction of school children in Nigeria. In other words, the Police, the State Security Service and other relevant security agencies have to be more protective than reactive.

Northern Nigeria, which is prone to abduction of school children, requires to be considered by relevant security agencies as a chronic hot spot for kidnapping of students. Consequently, proactive utility of the crime-chronic-hot- spot needs to be applied accordingly. In the leviathan task of crime prevention, intelligence gathering and proactive application of such intelligence is the key for effective prevention and such as, the Nigerian intelligence, policing and security community must act professionally to gather intelligence on abduction of school children with the aid of the model of crime-soft-spot, crime-temporary-spot, crime-hot-spot, and crime-chronic-spot and act swiftly with every vigour of proactiveness but not reactionary.

The security must be professional in their conduct and deter political influence from misguided members of the political class who may for self-reasons would want the intelligence so-gathered be circumvented and thereby perpetuate crime in the country. Professionalism is key to the task of crime prevention in any society and the security agencies must work together in oneness to achieve the overall interest of national security. Finally, the owners of schools in Nigeria have to on their guard by devising physical means of safeguarding their premises particularly by constructing parameter fences.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that abduction of school children in Nigeria is a threat to national security. Though it is preventable with the aid of EWS, which could be temporary hot, hot spots or chronic hot spots. The combined hot spot programme first allocates resources to chronic hot spots up to a maximum size in an area and then applies the EWS to remaining areas outside of the chronic hotspots,

optimizing over grid sizes and rule thresholds. This submission differs from the arguments of Grubesic (2006); Braga and Weisburd (2010); Braga (2012); Sherman (1995), Ochoga (2021) which mostly and primarily advocated for the use of chronic hot spots for crime prevention. But this paper is of the view that a combination of temporary spots, hot spots and chronic hot spots are essential recipes for intelligence gathering in the prevention of abduction of school children in Nigeria. Second, if the abduction of school children in Nigeria is to be prevented, this paper is of the view that the combined tradeoff curve uses the chronic hot spot curve up to the maximum and then uses the optimal EWS tradeoff curve for additional areas added to the endpoint of the chronic curve. Therefore, the rationale for the combined technique is based on two observations.

First, an analysis of chronic hot spots shows their crime densities are steeply peaked so that crime densities fall off exponentially as chronic hot spot areas are increased. For example, the hottest chronic hot spots in the abduction of school children in Nigeria covering roughly 1 % of Nigeria's area have a crime density of 738 P1V crimes per square mile over a year while the additional ring of chronic hot spot area from roughly 1–2 %has a density of 372 and that for 2–3 % has a density of 214 (Ochoga, 2021). Thus chronic hot spots in the abduction of school children in Nigeria could be used quickly to behaving more like temporary hot spots as sizes are increased. Second, the workable areas for chronic hot spots are a subset of workable areas for temporary hot spots, so that after the hottest areas are assigned to chronic hot spots, there may exist better or simply more of the best temporary hot spots such as next to the hottest chronic hot spots. This suggestion connotes comparative advantages of chronic and temporary hot spot programme, with the combination program capturing the best of both, providing overall the best efficiency and more fair and responsive allocations of police prevention resources in the prevention of abduction of school children in Nigeria.

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About the Author

1. Name – **Steve Ogwu Agbo**

2. Institution – **Institute for Peace & Conflict Resolution, Abuja.**

3. Position - Chief Research Fellow and Head, National Conflict Early Warning Early Response Unit;

4. Work Experience- Work as chief research fellow, National Conflict Early Warning Early Response Unit, IPCR, Abuja. Nigeria.

5. Contributions:

I. Initiated the Conflict Early Warning Indicator Monitors Scheme. The scheme presently has over 185 volunteers spread across the six geopolitical zones on Nigeria

ii. Proposed the workplace peace desk programme of the Institute which is aimed at mainstreaming peace in the workplace through the establishment of peace desk in workplaces across the country. The initiative is being expounded to cover the core civil service and the organized private sectors.

6. Publications:

- Women and Participation in Early Warning Monitoring and Reportage of Conflicts in Zamfara State, North-West, Nigeria;
- Elections in Nigeria: The Trajectory and Strategy for Mitigating Its Electoral Violence;
- Organizational Conflict Management and Staff Productivity in Research Institutions in Nigeria: A Case Study of Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution;
- Early Warning and Early Response Systems: An Overview of the Institute for Peace & Conflict Resolution's Framework;

Hobbies: Writing and Peacemaking.

Email Address: agbo@ipcr.gov.ng; ogwukojoja@gmail.com

THE PREVALENCE OF SCHOOL KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA: ANY IMPLICATIONS?

Victor EKWUKOMA, Ph.D

Abstract

This paper examined the new wave of incessant mass kidnapping of students from schools in northern Nigeria. The paper clearly noted that since the outbreak of Boko Haram (which means western education is a sin) terrorist group in 2009, both insurgents and bandits have attacked many educational institutions and several teachers and learners killed. The terrorists have added school kidnapping to their nefarious and heartless activities in Nigeria. School kidnapping is simply the act of taking students hostage in mass. Sometimes, the terrorists kidnap the students to make money through ransom payment by the government or the relatives of the victims, in some cases they kidnap the students just to spite the government and in some other cases they use the students as human shields and also as aids. Some reported cases of school abductions in Nigeria since 2014 were discussed in the paper. Importantly, the paper examined the negative implications of this menace on the educational and economic development of Nigeria. The paper recommended among others that governments at all levels should immediately beef up security in Nigerian schools to forestall further abduction of students in schools. It was also recommended that to effectively combat all forms kidnapping, the government should fight insurgency to a complete standstill because the various insurgent groups in the northern and southern parts of the country are all resorting to kidnapping of innocent population in their efforts to actualize their unholy agenda.

Introduction

The Nigerian educational system has recently come under a serious threat by the new wave of incessant kidnapping of students, especially boarding school students. Since the outbreak of Boko Haram (which means western education is a sin) terrorist group in 2009, both insurgents and bandits have attacked many educational institutions and several teachers and learners killed. According to a recent report by United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), over 2,295 teachers have been killed and 19,000 displaced and 1,400 schools destroyed with majority unable to open due to incessant violence in the northeastern Nigeria (wwww.unicef.org). Female students are the worst victims as many of them have been abducted. This menace of school abductions has escalated beyond the northeastern Nigeria. It has sadly held its grip on the entire northern part of Nigeria (North-East, North-West and North-Central). This paper examined the trend of school abductions in Nigeria and the educational implications.

The Concept of Kidnapping

Kidnapping is derived from the root word kidnap which, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (9th Edition), means to take somebody or a group of people away illegally and keeping them as prisoners, especially in order to get money or something else for releasing them. Simply put, kidnapping is the act of taking people hostage for ransom payment. Inyang and Abraham (2013) cited in Ibrahim and Mukhtar (2017) defined kidnapping as the forcible seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person against his/her will. On their part, Fage and Alabi (2017) lucidly defined kidnapping as the forceful or fraudulent abduction of an individual or a group of individuals for economic, political, religious reasons and so on. Kidnapping is a

national problem that has not spared any region in Nigeria. It has eaten very deeply into the fabric of the Nigerian state (Dodo, 2010). However, this social scourge is ostensibly flourishing more in the northern part of Nigeria due to terrorism, banditry and other forms of violent crimes that have become the order of the day in this part of Nigeria.

Some Reported Cases of School Abductions

The first major school abduction in the history of Nigeria was the abduction of over 200 Chibok girls on the 14th of April 2014. Earlier, about fifty-nine male students were killed in Boys Technical College in Yobe State. It was reported that Boko Haram fighters cold-bloodedly slit their throats. Another horrific abduction of female students was the case of the Dapchi girls who were kidnapped on the 19th of February, 2018. During that sad incident, 113 female students were reportedly kidnapped from the school. Two years after Dapchi incident, Nigeria witnessed another devastating blow from the abduction of male students from Government Science Secondary School, Kankara, Kastina State on the 11th of December, 2020. According to a report by *Wikipedia*, a gang of gunmen on motorcycles attacked the school where more than 800 students reside, for over an hour uninterrupted and abducted 344 students. Three days after the Kankara school abduction which sent shivers down the spines of Nigerians, Kastina State Governor, Aminu Bello Masari, announced that the abductors had contacted them and negotiations were ongoing for the release of the students. While the nation was still immersed in the rude shock over the Kankara ugly incident that could best be described as an international embarrassment, there was another reported case of abduction of 80 female students from Hizburrahim Islamiyah School, Mahuta, Kastina State on the 20th of December, 2020. The students were reportedly kidnapped on their way home from a Maulud occasion. According to the spokesman of the Kastina State Police command, SP Gambo Isah, the girls on a procession met the bandits who had already kidnapped four persons and rustled 12 cows from Danbaure village of Funtua Local Government Area of Kastina State and were trying to escape into the forest. The police image maker further added that through the efforts of the police and vigilante personnel, who engaged the bandits in a gun duel, the kidnapped students were rescued. The dust raised by this incident had not settled when the news of the abduction of 27 students, 3 staff and 12 of their relatives from Government Science College, Kagara, Niger State broke out. The students and staff of the college were kidnapped by a sophisticatedly armed gang of abductors, who stormed the school at around 2 a.m. on the 17th of February, 2021. A boy was reportedly killed during the raid. After more than ten days in captivity, the 27 boys and their teachers were reportedly released together with the relatives of the staff who were part of the unfortunate incident.

Another pathetic incident of school abduction is the recent case of the students of Government Girls Science Secondary School in Jangebe, Zamfara State. The female students – about 317 in number – were abducted from a boarding school in Jangebe during a raid by armed bandits. The incident was the second school kidnapping in February 2021. On the 2nd of March, 2021, about 279 of the students were reportedly released in a melodramatic circumstance. The Jangebe unfortunate incident was followed by the abduction of 39 students from the Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation, Mando, Kaduna State on the 12th of March, 2021. According to CNN report, about 39 students were abducted from the school on the fateful day by armed bandits. According to the Commissioner for Kaduna State Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwa, the kidnappers were engaged by troops of the Nigerian Army who successfully rescued 180 persons: 42 female students, eight staff and 130 male students; about 30 students, a mix of males and females, were yet to be accounted for. However, some of the students told a different story. Ezra Jona, a 25 year old student, told CNN that the kidnappers had left the site long before the soldiers arrived. “The bandits were already gone when the soldiers came to recue us. They evacuated us to their barracks. I was very confused and afraid,” Jona said. Some other students corroborated Jona's report. Later, the gunmen released several videos showing the abducted students being maltreated as they beg the government to pay the some of N500m ransom being demanded by the criminals. Parents of the students also confirmed that the abductors reached out to them and demanded N500m. The co-education Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation is a higher education institution located in Afaka, a forest community close to Nigerian Defence Academy

barracks. Students in the school are aged between 19 and 25 on average and specialize in agricultural studies.

The latest case of mass abduction of students is the one that occurred on the 15th of March, 2021 at Universal Basic Education (UBE) Primary School, Rama village, Birnin Gwari Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The Guardian reported that that the incident occurred while the pupils were trooping into the school around 9 a. m. on Monday. The gunmen reportedly came on about 12 motorcycles and abducted about three teachers and some pupils.

Table 1: Summary of Major Cases of School Abductions in Nigeria Since 2014

Date	Name of School	Number of Students Abducted
April 14, 2014	Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State.	276
February 19, 2018	Government Girls Technical College, Dapchi, Yobe State.	113
December 11, 2020.	Government Science Secondary School, Kankara, Kastina State.	344
December 20, 2020.	Islamiyyah School, Mahuta, Kastina State.	80
February 17, 2021.	Government Science College, Kagara, Niger State.	27
February 26, 2021.	Government Girls Science Secondary School, Jangebe, Zanfara State	317
March 12, 2021	Federal College of Forestry, Mando, Kaduna State.	39
March 15, 2021	Universal Basic Education (UBE) Primary School, Rama, Kaduna State.	No number yet

Source: Daily Trust (16th March, 2021)

Implications of School Abductions

The prevalence of abduction of school children in Northern Nigeria has a lot of devastating effects on education, economy and the victims both within the northern region and the entire country. One of the implications on education is that this scourge of school kidnapping, if not checked, will create school apathy in children and parents. Many children and parents especially in the northern part of Nigeria may lose interest completely in western education. This will be a clear actualization of the barbaric goal of the Boko Haram fighters whose mantra is that western education is a sin. The loss of interest in formal schooling will apparently worsen the number of out-of-school children, which UNICEF put at over10.5 million in Nigeria.

Another adverse effect of school kidnapping is **disruption of academic activities. As has been observed, and often the case, the immediate impact of closure of schools due to the activities of kidnappers is the distortion of academic activities in affected schools. For instance,** some states in the north recently announced closure of schools because of the fear that more students could be kidnapped. Throughout the period that the schools will remain closed, teaching and learning will be grounded. This development will further disrupt the school system which is just recovering from the heavy setback it suffered due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdowns in the country.

Another implication of the rising wave of school abductions is the wrong signals they send to the international community. Mass kidnapping of students and all forms of kidnapping activities create negative headline news in local and international media which dents the image of Nigeria globally and thus discourages investors. This unarguably leads to economic paralysis.

Furthermore, the growing incidence of school abductions could lead to increase in crime among children whose education has been abruptly halted due to the closure of schools because of fear of further attacks**.** It is common knowledge that when children are not in school, some of them become idle, and an idle mind, they say, is the devil's workshop. Some of the children could embrace anti-social behavior and criminal activities as a result of the idleness forced on them by these criminals and the government that has failed to decisively deal with them and bring this negative enterprise to an end.

Apart from death and serious physical and psychological injuries some of the kidnapped students suffer in the hands of their captors, the prevalence of school kidnapping also discourages investment in education. Many families who were eking out a living in several northern states and were investing in the educational development of their children have had to relocate to parts of the country with less threat of their kids being kidnapped in school and incidents of school closure.

The prevalence of school kidnapping portends danger for educational and economic growth in the northern region and the entire Nigeria because whatever affects any part of Nigeria, affects all parts of the country.

Conclusion

School kidnapping is on the increase in Nigeria and it is prevalent mostly in the north. This is not to say that there are no cases of kidnapping in other regions of Nigeria. As a matter of fact, there is no part of Nigeria

where kidnapping is not rife. In some parts of the country, for instance, people live in perpetual fear of kidnappers who attack those they suspect to have money for ransom right in their homes. The focus of this paper is on the new form of kidnapping which is school kidnapping, the mass adoption of students from the school. The prevalence of school kidnapping portends grave danger on educational and economic development in the northern region and the entire nation because whatever affects any part of the country, affects all parts. In view of this, the government must take urgent and committed steps to nip this national menace of school abduction in the bud before it snowballs into a situation that will not only scuttle national developmental efforts, but also unleash untold consequences.

Suggestions

Based on the preceding discussions, the following suggestions were made:

1. The government should immediately beef up security in Nigerian schools to forestall further abduction of students in schools.

2. To effectively combat all forms kidnapping, the government should fight insurgency because the various insurgent groups in the northern and southern parts of the country are all resorting to kidnapping of innocent population in their efforts to further their causes.

3. The government should engage mercenaries in the war against terrorism in Nigeria so as to bring the activities of terrorists including school kidnapping to an end.

4. The government should deploy modern technology in the fight against terrorism. For instance, there are technological devices that can be used to track kidnappers in their hideouts.

5. The political elite should stop politicizing security issues. All hands should honestly and sincerely be on decks in the war against terrorism in Nigeria. Corrupt individuals within the nation's security architecture should be fished out, thoroughly dealt with and dismissed from the security agencies.

6. Government should be sincere in identifying and dealing with those sponsoring terrorism and other organized crimes such as school kidnapping in Nigeria.

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About the Author

Victor Ekwukoma is a creative writer, communications specialist and an educational researcher. He holds a B A (Ed) degree in English and Literature with Second Class Honours (Upper Division), a Master's and a PhD in Sociology of Education. He is an academic staff of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), Abuja. A prolific writer with several awards, Victor has to his credit over 60 academic publications including books and learned journal articles published in reputable national and international journals. His areas of research interest include deviance, social dynamics, gender, educational policies and implementation frameworks.

SUSTAINING BASIC EDUCATION QUALITY AMID SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

Tolutope Idowu Oke Ph.D
&
Olagunju Olawale Lateef

Abstract

This paper examines the sustainable development of basic education schools amid security challenges in Nigeria and the way forward, it seeks intervention into the myriads of insurgences and other social vices perpetrated by the students within and outside the school which constitutes insecurity in the school environment. The paper therefore discussed the concepts of sustainable development, security challenges in basic schools and effects on academics and health in schools, causes of security challenges in schools, security challenges in Nigeria as a whole. The security challenges highlighted include; covid-19 pandemics, deviant behaviours such as: drug addiction, campus prostitution/ promiscuity, cultism, alcoholism, indecent dressing, vandalism and unrest. Some of causes of insecurity mentioned include: inadequate socialisation, frustration, poor parental upbringing, feeling of rejection, lack of cooperation, strict rules and regulations by the school authority, poverty and so on. Some recommendations were provided which include; collective efforts to address current security situation in our country, Security of the children should be guaranteed for effective teaching and learning to take place, The use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) should be intensified in curbing insecurity in schools, Entrepreneur's development education should be part and parcel of basic school curriculum, School administration should invent security and vigilante group in the schools to ensure safety of the student in campus premises. To ensure health safety practices, schools authority should strictly adhere to the NCDC directives, and government at various levels should enforce the rules and regulations guiding the conduct of re-opening schools. Lastly it was also recommended that online education unit should be establishes at the federal and state ministry of education and integrate digital literacy experts into planning committee on visual learning.

Key words: **Sustainable Development, Basic School, Quality Education, Covid-19 Pandemic, Security Challenges.**

Introduction

Education is an instrument per excellence for sustainable development and national transformation over the years, no nation at the global level relegates the integrity of educational provision to her citizens. However, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) also recognized education as an essential tool for the national socio-economic development. This is to say that the Federal Republic of Nigeria recognized the importance of education for a sustainable national development. However, over the years, the educational provision to the citizens had been facing serious problems like, economic recession, poverty, climate change, politics in education, incessant teachers' strikes etc all which had made the educational provisions to the Nigeria citizens so difficult. The stakeholders in educational programme like teachers, parents, academic staff union and well meaning individuals have called on the three tiers of government to come to the aid of the crumbling educational system, yet no response from the government on the adequate funding. The aftermath of the situation lead to the overcrowded classrooms, teachers' inefficiency and administrative ineffectiveness of the school heads and teachers. The perpetration and adaptation of the teachers in such ugly school situation resulted into the poor students' academic performance and social vices and insecurity in the school system.

In addition, Nigeria witnessed a sudden outbreak of COVID -19 on the 14th February 2020, a pandemic called corona virus which was an infectious disease and virus at the global level up till date. The COVID-19 continues to spread through community transmissions leading to the death of many Nigerian, without sympathy to social status, religion, poor or rich, students and non-students. The Federal Republic of Nigeria through her agencies National

Centre for Diseases Control (NCDC) and others in a bid to curtail the spread and the death of the COVID-19 patients, the agency adopted the measures like; social distancing, the use of face masks, washing of hands with soap and sanitizers, the closing down of schools, religious centres, markets, hotels, parks, ports and lockdown of all and sundry in the houses to restrict the movement and to reduce the overcrowded areas which may lead to personal contacts and community transmission. However, in order to keep the school aged children busy educationally and to keep them against any forms of disasters in the society, the Federal Government introduced online education for all the educational levels, teachers and researchers.

Online education according to Etejere (2016), is a flexible instructional delivery service comprising of any kind of learning that take place through the internet access, distance learning and e- learning mode which was designed to complement the traditional learning process, However, online education had become an exciting strategy for effective instructional delivery services in the educational system because, it gives the students the ample opportunities to access information any time and any place just as they do in the traditional classroom. The educational resources needed for both the online education operations and the online students according to Damilola (2013) are printed materials, audio and video cassette, CD-ROM, television, radio broadcast, computer and satellite transmission, computer, cellular telephone, e-mail, internet, e-journal, e-book, laptops, IPhone, interactive boards,

However, Durosaro (2012) noted major challenge which is adequate funds for both the capital and recurrent expenses to operate the online education programme for the students who had been on lockdown in their various homes during insecurity and COVID-19 global pandemics. Inability of parents who are faced with the challenge of economic recession and locked down as a result of closed down school for insecurity and the idle children who must be alive by all means led to various deviant behaviours in the society, this was evident in various social vices such as; increase cases of rapes, vandalism and hoodlums during end SARS, robbery, kidnapping and bandits spreading all over the country.

Problem Statement

The spate of insecurity in the country is becoming very alarming. Reports of Cases of killings by the so called UNKNOWN GUN MEN recently in the country is worrisome. In early August, 23 people who were travelling from Bauchi to Ondo state were reportedly killed in Bassa Local Government Area, Plateau state and a reprisal attack was also reported which led to the death of 36 people in Yelwa Zangam Vilage, Jos North Local Government Area within a week interval and some other secret killings of students of the University of Jos which led to the closure and evacuation of students from the school premises.

Security is one of the important pre-conditions for peaceful human existence. Security sometimes referred to as protection of lives and properties. It is a sine qua non for a viable and sustainable society. Indeed, without a measure of public safety, normal human activities that enable a society exists, thrive and grow will be severely compromised (Nwadialor, 2011). Day-in-day-out in Nigeria, news seems to get from bad to worse, as the security situation deteriorates. The country that sends peace keeping assistance to neighbouring countries over the years can no longer guarantee peace for citizens in her own territory. Even the highest military training school (National Defence Academy) was attacked by the bandits 2 officers were killed and 1 kidnapped. This is a serious relegation of national security teams to a low

It is now a common phenomenon to wake up to the news of bombings, children butchered in the night, kidnapping and abduction of innocent school children during broad day and or night, communal clashes, Fulani herdsmen and farmers' clashes. No reasonable progress can be achieved in education sector of this kind of environment and no meaningful national transformations abound in such country.

The security challenge in Nigeria was as a result of accumulation of national problems ranging from leadership issue, corruption, unemployment, illiteracy and unnecessary wrangling among the political class. The desperate, intolerant and ruthless contests among political parties, political leaders and their followers are partly responsible for security challenges in the country. Some Nigerian politicians will do anything to win at the polls, including killing,

assaulting and disrupting public peace (Nwadialor, 2011). Sadly, some of those that constitute public nuisance have a way of escaping arrest or subverting punishment, leaving the vulnerable members of the society- women and children –to bear the consequence.

However, basic education is expected to provide succour by giving education and skills for individuals to live a healthy and productive lives hence, the issue of joblessness will be at low ebb. The National Policy on Education (FGN 2014) stated that Universal Basic Education is the education children received at primary education and upper basic stage of education, the broad goals of basic education shall be firstly, to prepare the individual for useful living within the society and secondly, for technical, teacher and senior secondary education. Therefore, this education through its various subjects is expected to develop an individual recipient physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, culturally, and technologically so as to be useful to themselves and contribute to national development and live a peaceful and safety life in the society (Oke, 2011).

The crux of the matter is how to manage learning activities in the basic schools with the present Covid-19 pandemics and security challenges in Nigeria. Basic education is for the development of personality and potentialities of an individual so as to enable him operate wisely and successfully in any society he finds himself. The onus lies on the school as a whole and teachers in particular; who teaches the students in the classrooms. It is based on this premise that this study is poised to examine the sustainability of basic education in the midst of various security and health challenges in Nigeria.

Security Challenges in Nigerian Schools

Security challenges mean unsafe grounds which might make it difficult or even impossible to channel any form of education especially basic education that will bring about sustainable development in the entire country. These security challenges can be internal or external. It is internal, if the causes are from within the school premises and external if it is caused by the society or outside the school. However, such deviant behaviours could be seen as crime, drunkenness, campus prostitution/ promiscuity, cultism, gambling, stubbornness, smoking and immorality, drug addiction, alcoholism, indecent dressing, fighting and vandalism which constitutes threats and destruct or constitutes insecurity in schools. However, natural disasters such as flood, fire outbreak, earthquake, covid-19 and other pandemics can also constitute threats to sustainability of basic education in Nigeria.

Causes of Security Challenges in Schools

A. Inadequate socialization.

A child that has only one parent may end up having inappropriate socialization. Single parent or death of one of the parent may lead to the above. Chauham (2008) states that the home environment is important in developing the personality of the child. The presence of both parents is very important in the upbringing of the child as each of them is endowed with their different style of correction measures that will help in moulding the child to behave well.

B. Frustration

A child who is unable to adjust himself to a new situation may try to look for alternative. Merriam-Webster in Ammanchukwu (2014) defined frustration as a feeling of anger or annoyance caused by being unable to do something. When this is the condition with any student, such student may either withdraw from school or engage in anti-social behaviour. Chauham (2008) further states that if the social authorities do not pay adequate attention to the need of the children at different level in organizing academic as well as curricular activities the children will be frustrated and their frustration will be manifested in anti-social activities.

Parents can also make their children frustrated due to their inability to provide what they (children) need at school, yet another cause of frustration in students may be examination failure. When some students find themselves in this kind of above situation, joining bad friends may be an alternative for them.

C. Poor Parental Upbringing

Parents are the first teacher of the child. They are supposed to tell what they are expected to do, which is based on the acceptable lives style of the society, but that is not done and also the children

are not given proper discipline by parent whenever they do wrong. Goffman (2013) opines that if the parents have no criteria of good discipline, sometimes they are too strict and sometimes too lenient, such type of discipline creates mental conflict in the mind of the child, if the parents quarrel drink or criticize each other in the presence of the children. These acts will have bad effects on them.

The loose moral values of the family, which throw the child into deviant behaviour at the initial state, follow them to the school. Those that never have such background from their homes may gradually be introduced into it or because of the derived satisfaction from the actions of those with deviant behaviour.

D. Feeling of rejection

Ammanchukwu (2014) agrees that when people feel rejected by the traditional values of school at both the academic and cultural levels, they may set up their own counter school culture, students who are classified as underachievers and troublemakers by school authority may find little interest in schooling. They may then look for their own way to satisfy their needs. Teachers may identify this kind of behaviour as deviant because the students are unwilling to study.

E. Lack of cooperation by subordinate

Teachers and students can refuse to act on the school authority's instruction which becomes deviant behaviour.

F. Strict rules by school authority

Reynolds (2010) mentions the degree of stringency with which schools enforces these rules is positively associated with levels of students' absenteeism and delinquency. If the school controls students strictly, negative effects might naturally follow. The school should be careful to watch to know when their rule is affecting the student negative and balance the situation.

G. Poverty

Poverty gives psychological trauma to a person. A student that comes from a poor family, where he is not being able to meet up with his expectation in life needs serious guidance and love so that he or she will not resort to deviant behaviour of stealing at the end.

Factors Affecting Online Basic Education Program During Insecurity in Nigeria.

Technological know-how: Online education is the communication delivery of information through adoption of e-learning and integrating learning with technology Akinnubi (2012). The instruction which is delivered by the use of pure digital technologies like CD-ROM, internet, private networks, embraced ICT. However, during the insecurity in Nigeria due to crises, killings, kidnappings, spread of disease like COVID-19-Pandemic and other security challenges, schools were always closed down and there is the need for online education programme for meetings, academic conferences, virtual classrooms, e-learning, e-experiments and blended learning. However, the online education is always difficult due to the challenges of implementation as technical infrastructure are not well developed, there are few technical staff that can maintain, install and operate the ICT gadget during the pandemics.

Poor supply of power and energy: Jimba (2016) noted that power and energy gad constituted great threats to the operation of online learning in Nigerian education system because of the regular and truncated power and energy supply. In Nigeria, there are villages that did not have electricity supply the operation of virtual classroom become difficult for the online education students. Chinedu-Eze, Chinedu-Eze and Bello (2018) noted that the failure of the online education was due to the fact that the available online educational facilities are not put into use in Nigeria. The authors stated that the utilization of e-learning facilities in educational delivery system in Nigeria is so poor towards effective administration of online education for a global competitiveness.

Economic recession and bankrupt: During insecurity and other pandemics, all socio-economic activities were totally lockdown as a result of dust to down curfew for weeks and months, or to curb the spread of diseases. All the schools, markets, trading activities, banks, hotels parks, parts, and roads were blocked to avoid further escalation of crises, re-occurrence of kidnapping, community transmission of the Covid-19 virus. This poses hardship on the people, there would be no money in circulation, food items were lockup in the shops. There were series of hunger to extent that the people found it so, tough to sustain their family. With this situation many cannot

have the purchasing power for any of the online education facility. Even to buy airtime for the laptops and phone become difficult. The situation affects the financing of online education programme during insecurity in Nigeria.

High cost of online education materials: For effective administration of online education in Nigeria facilities like computers, smart board, flannel graphs, satellites, inter connectivity, networks, IPhone, hyper net, laptops, palmtops, hand pad, airtimes, Wi-Fi, desktops e.t.c these are require for effective operation. However, the inflationary trend during the insecurity made these materials to be costly to purchase which made the online education difficult to operate in Nigeria.

Poor access and equity of the citizens to online Education: It should be noted that problem of access and equity to online education made the education to face problem of financial neglect mostly during insecurity. In the developing countries like Nigeria, there are 60% of the rural dwellers, internally displaced camps and other rural area centres that the children don't have opportunities to quality education like the counterparts at the urban centres. The issue of network service lacking in the rural areas worsen issue of unequal access to education which against the principle of UNESCO education for all 2030 (Sambo 2019).

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

Insecurity in the country is caused by a number of reasons some of the reasons are:

Lack of transparency from the leaders: Some political office holders are not sincere. If the leaders and members of their immediate family display affluence in a way to oppress the followership, there is tendency to promote crimes. In Nigeria, the salaries of National assembly members (senators) are not disclosed. Recently, it was reported in the media that people attended President Buhari Son's wedding with over 100 private Jets, in a country where majority are suffering of hunger. Transparency is the level of openness, sincerity and clarity of the leader in his administrative process (Oke, 2011). Transparency according to Akpa (2002) is the appropriateness, prudency and accountability of office holders in dispatching his administrative responsibility. Some political leaders in Nigeria feel above others when in position of authority and this poses serious security challenges to the society.

Unemployment situation in the country: The rate of unemployment of graduate and non-graduate in the country is alarming and no adequate measure of control is underway to checkmate the unemployment (Oke,2018). Report showed that, about 40% of Nigerians most of who are within the youth bracket, are not gainfully employed (UNESCO, 2014). Many graduates and non-graduates are free and idle.

One of the aims of technical education is to give training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who would be enterprising and self-reliant. In contrary, the policy on higher education was conspicuously silent on the self-employment version as the higher educational policy focused mainly on the development in the economy especially in the field of science and technical orientation (Oke, 2013).

High rate of Illiteracy: The rate of illiteracy in Nigeria is alarming. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization UNICEF (2017), reports that one out of every five Nigerian children is out of school. These out of school children, can do anything to survive because they lack formal training or skills for meaningful survival.

Unequal development: Another cause of insecurity could be traced to the lop-sided development the country found herself, for example, few cities were developed to standards; Nigerian resources are unevenly distributed between urban and rural areas as such may result in conflict (Ogundele, 2016).

People living in slums like Ajegunle, some slum dwellers in Port Harcourt, Kano, Ibadan and others are not always living a comfortable life and may result in conflicts. Sporadic fighting and killing between Aguleri and Umuleri in Anambra State was attributed to years of neglect and poverty which has put the environment in a sorry situation.

The masses in rural areas appear to have waged a cold war against the urban dwellers. They organize kidnapping of some influential men/women who visit home and ask for a huge ransom. As soon as they are

done with their operations they retreat to the rural/slum areas in hiding, so as to escape the law enforcement agencies. Adejumo (2014) enumerated a lot of insecurity in Nigeria such as: food insecurity, financial insecurity, personal insecurity, national insecurity and others. All these affect human lives in one way or the other thereby affecting the national economy.

Security challenges in Nigeria as a whole range from violence in schools which entails fighting, use of dangerous weapon like guns, machetes and others; to violence outside the school environment and extended to the larger society as kidnapping, Boko haram, raping and all others. The Nigerian government needs to provide the able bodied, well talented men and women who could move the nation forward. Nigerian schools are the best ground to nurture those future leaders who will make adequate use of scientific discovery to produce a modern man, new equipment/technology, new political understandings and accommodations, innovations in various fields of endeavour. How can this great nation achieve these feats if the environment is very hostile?

In his research findings, Katsina (2017) discovered that insecurity is manifestation of deep rooted and structurally entrenched crisis of development that creates the environment for the emergence of conditions of poverty, unemployment and inequality in the country. According to him, these could lead to frustration, alienation and ultimately, social discontent that spark violence and insecurity. Without the enabling environment, he concluded, these conditions could not have metamorphosed to serious national security problems threatening to tear the country apart.

Nigerians have lost a lot of manpower, school children and properties since the insurgence of Boko haram started in the northern part of Nigeria. For instance, 4 final year medical students of University of Jos were killed in the bomb blast at terminus in 2012. They have attacked churches, schools, police stations, army barracks and gatherings everywhere. The deadly operations of Boko Haram made the Federal government of Nigeria close down Unity Schools in the North East and not less than 10,000 secondary school students were affected.

Insecurity as it is in Nigeria has dangerous consequences. Firstly, it threatens the very existence of our nation thereby making nonsense of the labour of our heroes past towards nation building. Secondly, it slows down progress in all dimensions. It is a general truth that no concrete development could be attained in an atmosphere of instability. On the educational front, for instance, development is being affected as schools in the affected places were under lock for more than 10 months. Thirdly, it is leading to a serious dent on the image of the country within the international country; we now have cases where some countries warn their citizens concerning visiting Nigeria. Equally, Nigerians living abroad and those willing to travel aboard have become subjects of serious ridicule as they are exposed to all manners of unbelievable treatments.

The recent revelation of criminality shows that quality education is the key to bringing normal situation in the society. When a child receives quality education he will be in a better position to decide what to do with his life instead of carrying deadly weapons and killing innocent civilians. Quality education exposes one to various skills and knowledge and makes one make sound judgment and wise choices too.

Education is the key to sustainable living and effort should be channeled towards it in order to achieve the national goals and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Curriculum should be overhauled to accommodate modern teaching and learning by employing the use of computers and its accessories to make learning practical and enjoyable. Students should be taught how to source information, send and retrieve information. Therefore, quality basic education is needed to attain sustainable living and in order to achieve that quality teachers are needed to pilot the affairs of the schools. Again, quality education can be defined in various ways. It is the learning that meets high standards. The mode of learning is recognized by international standards. It incorporates use of modern methods of learning like e-learning

Management of basic education in a period of covid-19 pandemics and security challenges requires quality teaching by highly qualified teachers who have a passion in their lives and a deep regard for their students. The National Policy on Education (FGN,2014).stated that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers Therefore the

Nigerian education system should strive to develop teachers of high quality in order to take the Nigerian child to greater heights. Ololube (2009) identified that in order to be effective in the classroom teachers need to be curious, imaginative, empathetic, interesting, humorous, friendly and hardworking, thereby creating a learning environment that enhances and strengthens the learning disposition of the students. Furthermore, Nigerian children need to be taught by quality teachers who could apply various innovations that would help the students acquire live skills that will help them be their own masters in a harsh economy, that is, being security conscious, self –employed and even employer of labour. The curriculum should guarantee ecological literacy reducing alienation from natural world and increasing connection to the natural world through the use of internet.

Recommendations

It is imperative that we collectively make concerted efforts to address current insecurity situation in our country. Irrespective of ethnic, religious, cultural, political and other such divisive affiliations, all of us have a duty towards maintaining peaceful co-existence in the country.

1. Government at all levels should come out with security measures that could stem the tide of insecurity across the land, our leaders need to eschew all divisive tendencies and other acts that could further throw the country into crisis.
2. Establishment of online Education unit: The Federal Ministry of Education should establish a unit to take care of the online education programme. The unit head will see to the administration of the programme and to see that online distance education have public sympathy.
3. School administration should invent security and vigilante group in the schools to ensure safety of the student in campus premises as well as emergent religious organization should revisit their doctrines which give room for promoting moral decadence.
4. Establishment of online education centres in the strategic places in the state: Also, there should be centre for the mobile and online education in the strategic place of every state, whereby the citizens will have access and appreciate the programme to be funded by all. Financing of online education should be responsibility of all and sundry.
5. Integrating digital literacy experts into the planning committee of the online Education: When planning online education for the country qualified ICT experts need to be used for the planning. The experts will know where to site the masks for the benefit of those in the rural and urban centres.
6. Security of the children should be guaranteed for effective teaching and learning to take place. In order to save students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders from insecurity, it is crucial that all tiers of government find a lasting solution to the school safety problem.
7. The use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) should be intensified in curbing insecurity and the spread of Covid-19 as this will enhance social distancing rules in schools. Such as: automated emergency notification systems-one of the fastest growing safety and communications applications in schools today.

Conclusion

This paper has revealed that basic education, which is the foundation of national development in the country, is besieged with myriads of deviant behaviours and security challenges. However, for meaningful development to take place in the basic institutions, the government must be ready to take responsibility to handle the issues positively and address the challenges adequately.

Explanation lies on the fact that it is through education that a nation position itself in the threshold of national development as well as educate its citizenry out of the scourge of STDs, insurgency, crime wave, malaria and others too numerous to mention. Education is the machinery that propels a nation into self reliance and development. As a social service, by implication, education should be accessible to all, male or female, Jew or gentile, Christian or Muslim, rich or poor. The responsibility of preventing or curbing insecurity in our schools should be a collective effort resting on parents, teachers, religious leaders, school authorities as well as government.. The paper concluded that adequate financial resources should be allocated for developing online education programme for implementation during an unfavourable situation like

Covid-19 pandemic or any other disaster that may enter the country.

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About the Authors

1.Dr. Oke Tolutope Idowu is an Associate Professor of Educational Management at the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education. University of Jos, Nigeria. He Obtained B.Ed. (Educational Management) Unilorin, M.Ed. (Educational Administration and Planning) UniJos, and Ph.D. (Educational Administration and Planning) Nassarawa State University, Keffi. With 15 years teaching experience. He has published over sixty (60) research articles in reputable Journals including Local, National and International and participated in over twenty- five (25) conferences National and International. Supervised over thirty (Post graduate Degree students including PGDE, M.Ed. & Ph.D. Obtained five academic award of excellence. Among his professional membership are; National Association of Educational Administration and Planning (NAEAP), Commonwealth Council of Educational Administration and Management (CCEAM), Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria(TRCN), African Journal of Educational Assessors (AJEA) Forum of Educational Benchmakers, Nigeria (FEBN). Reviewer to Continental Journal of Education(CJE), International Journal of Economics, Management and Trade(IJEMT), Asian Journal of Language, Literature and Culture Studies (AJLLCS).

2.Olagunju, Idowu Lateef Olawale attended, Lagos State University Ojoo Lagos and Nassarawa State University where he obtained a Doctoral degree in Educational Administration and Planning.

He was once the Acting Director/Secretary, Federal Scholarship Board and currently the Secretary General, Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO in Federal Ministry of Education.

He is a senior Pastor in the Redeemed Christian Church of God, a prolific writer and married with 3 children. His hobbies are reading and writing.

E-mail- olawaletijesuyahoo.com

THE IMPACT OF INSECURITY ON GIRL CHILD EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

Insecurity is a social problem that cannot be over-emphasized because of its far-reaching implications and dire consequences on education, the economy and society in general. In recent times, the series of bombings and killings, kidnapping and armed robbery attack, political and economic related assassinations has become a multi-hydra headed monster which security agents in Nigeria have challenges of handling. The effect of these attacks has further exacerbated the fragile school system which is antithetical to sustainable and national development. The supranational issue of insecurity that stems from organized high profile crimes perpetrated through transnational syndication and racketeering has continuously posed threats to survival of nations. The vulnerability of women and girls in Northern Nigeria is likened to an 'endangered species' that struggles daily to survive. That region of the country is faced with developmental challenges: poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, insecurity and now, blatant abuse of health and reproductive rights of women and girls. Matters of insecurity are topical issues in today's Nigeria education. This paper examines the impact of insecurity threats on girl child in northern Nigeria. As the saying goes “when you educate a woman you educate a nation” this clearly exemplifies the importance of the girl child to the nation. However, girl-child's access and inclusion in education have been limited by damage to school facilities, emotional disorders, forced marriage, unwanted pregnancy, fear, poverty and lack of teachers. In doing this, the paper explain the concept of girl-child and insecurity. Level of girl participation in basic education in Northern Nigeria was also examined. Insecurity challenges affecting girls' participation in schools in northern Nigeria such as poor school community relationship, lack of security outfit, sexual harassment and lack of infrastructure were also discussed. The paper, therefore, recommended among other things that school administrators should work tireless toward the promotion and improvement of school-community relationship.

INTRODUCTION

According to Akintunde and Musa (2016), security is perceived as a basic human need that contributes to effective learning. Psychologists proposed that security is crucial for human survival. Following the postulation of Hierarchy of Needs by Abraham Maslow, the lower needs of man like food, shelter and security must be met before other higher needs like education or intellectual/cognitive needs (Akintunde, 2015). The inability to satisfy the need for security may cause stress in individuals and hinder them from pursuing higher level needs.

On a general note, security can be seen as the state of safety, freedom from danger and protection from physical harm. By nature, human beings thrive in security and are instinctively driven by the need to maximize available resources to ensure their physical, physiological and psychological wellbeing. This implies that security is not only limited to protection from physical harm. Security also involves existence of environmental factors that instil peace of mind in an individual in order to empower him/her to function optimally in the society.

Conversely, insecurity is on the rise globally as ease of transportation and community facilitate movement of persons and ideas across national boundaries sometimes in real time. It represents or describes both a state of mind and a physical situation. People, and even animals and in recent time, inanimate things such as historical monuments and sites face insecurity arising from the activities of human beings.

INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Security involves existence of environmental factors that instill peace of mind in an individual in order to empower him/her to function optimally in the society.

However, insecurity is concerned with feelings of uncertainty, dangers or threats to life. Insecurity is a negative feeling involving fear, anxiety, uncertainty and injustice, among others. When an individual does

not have control over a situation but has to rely on the cooperation of others that cannot be guaranteed, the result may be frustration or insecurity. Recently, Nigeria`s political history has been chequered by various forms of violent insecurity ranging from intra-communal, inter-communal and inter-ethnic clashes; religious violence; armed robbery; assassination, Ritual killings involving innocent people, kidnapping, Police brutality, extra judicial killings and "boko haram" insurgency (Mutiullah cited in Abubakar, 2011) and so on.

Otite (2012) submits that the state of insecurity in Nigeria could be attributed to security lapses on the part of security agents. Abubakar (2005) pinpoints failure of government to provide or manage the basic human needs of their citizens, ethnic disagreements, and national resource contentions as some of the factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria. According to Udoh (2015), insecurity in Nigeria is caused by porous borders, illegal arms importation, proliferation of illegal arms, ethnicity, emergence of ethnic militia groups, corruption, marginalization, poor leadership, religious fanaticism/extremism, and unemployment. Olawale (2016) is of the view that unemployment, imbalanced development, corruption, weak judicial system, and porous coastal borders as causes of insecurity in Nigeria. Nadabo (2013) sees bad leadership, corruption, and illiteracy among other factors breeding insecurity in Nigeria. Akintokunbo (2011) links insecurity in Nigeria to massive and unchecked corruption, greed, selfishness, unpatriotism, lack of political will and conscience, and of course, lack of vision and purpose. King (2016) states the causes of insecurity in Nigeria to include a combination of the following factors: lack of institutional capacity, lack of basic necessities, pervasive material inequalities and unfairness, ethno-religious conflicts, weak security system, loss of socio-cultural and communal value system, porous borders, rural/urban drift, anti-social and irresponsible companies, unemployment, and poverty. Katsina (2012) reviewed the state of insecurity in Nigeria and submitted that it is a concomitant of the deep and structurally entrenched crisis of development that creates conditions for inequality, poverty, and unemployment, illiteracy and ignorance.

According to Oluwa (2014), he noted that the effects of insecurity include increase in the quantum of internally displaced persons; political, social, and economic disruptions; and slow economic growth. All of above have impacts on the humans that occupy locations experiencing insecurity. Unfortunately, the most vulnerable are children and in particular, the girl child.

GIRL CHILD EDUCATION

Over the years, scholars have continued to debate on the concept of the girl child. With gender equality being advocated by international and domestic bodies, the girl-child can be described as a female child who is under the supervision of adults who may be her relations, parents or guardians (Offorma, 2009). They are biological female off springs that are between the ages of 0 and 18 years. In essence, the period that includes their infancy "0-5" years as well as their early (6-12 years) and late adolescent (12-18 years) phases of development respectively (Ponte, 2006).

At this phase of development, they can be easily impressionable by their environment and the adults around them, they therefore model their attitude around the observations they visualize in their everyday life consequently impacting and shaping their emotional and mental development (Atama, 2012; Kobani & Nkpolu, 2014).

Some scholars hold the view that education is a requirement for human capital development, which is the bedrock of any sustainable economic development (Nmadu et al., 2010; Chinwudu et al., 2016). In fact, no country can meet its true potential if the educational sector is not developed. It is an essential tool in ensuring the acquisition of power, prestige, greatness as well as survival of the human race. It is the foundation for nation building (Oyitso & Olumukoro, 2012). Education can therefore be defined as the process of developing an individual's mental, social, emotional, spiritual and political intelligence through the provision of requisite information and circumstances that enables this (Kobani & Nkpolu, 2014). According to Ocho & Nwangwu (2005) education is the procedure an individual undergoes that make them relevant to the society. Another school of thought proposes that education is the process that sees an individual acquire relevant skills and competencies that enable them actualize their true potentials and reach self-

actualization (Onyido & Osigwe, 2017). Bulut & Bars (2013) postulates that, it aids in the preservation, transmission and enhancing cultures across societies. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Right in 1948 (Article 26), everyone has the right to education. Regardless of gender, race, location, nationality or physical condition, everyone has the right to quality education. This was further underscored by the adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number four and seeks to "Ensure Inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." This was further expounded as follows "Ensure gender equality, human rights, the rule of law, and universal access to public services. Reduce relative poverty and other inequalities that cause social exclusion. Prevent and eliminate violence and exploitation, especially for women and children."Dambazau (2014) quoting Act 26 of 1948 on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, sees education as not only a public good, it is also a human right that is essential for the exercise of all other human rights, especially in promoting individual freedom and empowerment. This definitely includes the girl child.

No country's development is sustained when women are excluded from access to education. In fact, education has a profound effect on girls' and women ability to claim other rights and achieve status in society, such as economic independence and political representation (DFID, 2005) The World Bank stated it better; that educating the girl-child is a prerequisite investment in building the economy (Nmadu et al., 2010; Alabi and Alabi, 2013). Ensuring that girls across the world have access to quality and consistent education is paramount to preventing early or forced marriage; lowering maternal and neonatal mortality; spurring a woman's financial independence; creating smaller more sustainable families, improved opportunities for women participation in politics; increasing children's educational attainment levels and boosting national economic growth (Alam, Warren & Applebaum,2016). Summer (1992) postulated that educating girls could quite possibly yield a higher rate of return than any other investment in the developing world. Hence, this prevalent belief has spurred governments across the world to invest massively in education with the end goal, to engender development. For example, Osaru and Umaru (2017) observed the incredible human capital development in Japan and Germany between 1948 and 1972, and the reason was attributed to the massive investment in education via technology where the general productivity of an individual rose by 8.2% in Japan and 5.7% in Germany in one year.

Nigeria is a signatory to various international agreements among which are the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UNICEF, 2012). To fulfill these international agreements, Nigeria has set up structures toward the achievement of the rights of the Nigerian children, especially as they relate to EFA and MDGs. The major thrust of Education sector reforms in Nigeria has been to widen access and improve the quality of education delivery in a manner that is equitable. Since 1999 when Universal Basic Education was launched, a good deal of attention and resources has been devoted to achieving EFA and Education MDGs ahead of the deadline of 2015 (UNICEF, 2012).

In this present day, the importance of education cannot be overemphasized. Investing in education, especially girl-child education is the greatest investment any country can make. However, despite these efforts, the education sector is still characterized by a variety of challenges that make participation of girls in education very difficult particularly in Nigeria (Akunga, 2010). The Nigeria Girl Child has grabbled with issues such as gender discrimination; injustices sexual exploitation of women and girls and the most prevalent of them all is insecurity.

INSECURITY AND GIRL CHILD EDUCATION

Nigeria's breakdown in security is particularly attacking education, notably in the country's north. Before now, the girl child education was not thriving as it was supposed to. In a similar report by the World Bank Group (2008) and the Global Education First Initiative/Global Planet Foundation (2008), the education system in northeastern Nigeria was already fragile with almost 52 percent of children being out of school in the region. The girl child accounted for only 35 percent of the remaining 48 percent that attends school. Even those who did

attend school in the northeast often had very poor outcomes with about 72 percent being unable to read on completion of grade six.

With the advancement of technology and social developments in recent times, the situation appears to have improved. But With eruption of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria in 2009 and rising cases of kidnapping, the girl child education seemed to have come under further threat. The 12-year-old Boko Haram insurgency and the more rise in armed banditry have deepened the nation educational crisis that has been worse for northern Nigeria- and for girls. For a decade, the government and UNICEF have estimated that of the 8.7 Million to 13 Million primary school-aged children, 60 percent of them have been girls. The north eastern at the epicenter with nearly 75 percent of its girl child out of school (United State Institute of Peace, 2021).

The main tenet of the deadly book haram group is that western education is evil and should be abhorred. The operations and activities of Boko Haram sect against education came to limelight following the abduction of 276 girls of Government Girls College, Chibok. This internationally well-publicized case of school kidnapping brought a new dimension to Nigeria`s insecurity challenge as many secondary school attacks have been recorded thereafter.

Kidnapping is a criminally induced behavior that is not entirely a new societal challenge. Kidnapping can be defined as the process of abducting an individual or group of individuals with a view to achieving a desired objective (Ngwama, 2014). According to Fage & Alabi (2017) it involves the application of force to take human beings as hostages to achieve a particular aim. Furthermore, it can be defined as the act of forcefully seizing and detaining an individual by unwanted act on the part of the victim.

According to Buba (2015) the children who are kidnapped are subjected to emotional trauma as a result of rape, child marriage, slavery and torture. The children are also used as human shield and suicide bombers (Sanni, 2015). The insurgents as well as kidnappers have since the commencement of their operations disrupted the educational system in the North with the most destructive effects on the education of young girls. Ovuorie (2015), reported that the effect of these vices have seen the attendance in schools across the country dropped as a result of fear of such events (Ovuorie, 2015).

Insecurity Threats Affecting Girl Child Participation in Schools in Northern Nigeria

Some of the challenges affecting girls' participation in basic education include the following:

Lack of infrastructure

Over the years, schools in the Nigeria especially in the north, lack basic amenities such as access road, power supply, water supply and fences/gates, particularly in boarding secondary schools. This lack of infrastructure has worsened the state of insecurity in most schools (Bakwai, 2013b). Children panic in the night as every shadow may appear as an approaching kidnapper, Boko Haram insurgent or an armed robber. In terms of emergency, security agents get no access to some of these schools due to lack of access road.

Lack of Security Outfits

Schools in Nigeria generally did not require high-level security guards. Unlike banks where police have to be deployed to prevent armed robbers from breaking the banks, schools only need a night guard to discourage the activities of burglars. Police are only seen in schools when there is riot in schools. Aside higher institutions, basic schools have no security office except a gate man where provided. With present kidnapping, bombing and armed robbery, school environment has become a threat to children especially the girl child. In March, 2021 as reported by BBC.Com, nearly 300 students were kidnapped from the Government Girls Science Secondary School in Jangede, Zamfara state. In the same development, in June 2021, a mass of heavily armed bandits struck in Birnin Yauri area of kebbi state abducting school girls of Federal Government Collee Birnin Yauri after overpowering the mobile policemen who were on ground (Haruna, 2021). Similarly, a recent attack in September 2021 on a secondary school in Zamfara state, Northwestern region of Nigeria where 73 children including girls were kidnapped was the latest in a spree of raids.

Bad School Community Relationship

Also, insecurity challenges arising from bad school community relationship have posed a threat to girl child participation in education. According to Shuaibu (2015), a safe school is one that fosters peaceful, positive or cordial relationships among students, teachers, administrators and its community. School community relationship is a two-way symbiotic arrangement through which the school and the community co-operate with each other for the realization of goals of the community and vice versa. It is the degree of understanding and goodwill, which exists between the school and the community (Okorie, Ememe & Egu, 2009). When school community relationship is bad, the security of the school is at stake. It is because of the bad relationship that exists between Boko Haram sect and schools that led to the Kidnapping of Chibok girls many months ago. The situation makes schools afraid of even their immediate environment.

Military Use of and Military Presence Near Schools

Nigerian government forces and pro-government militia have also used schools for military purposes. The presence of armed forces in or near schools and the risk of retaliatory attacks by Boko Haram increase the likelihood that children's education will be disrupted. As of May 2017, a UN agency reported that Nigerian government forces were using 17 schools for military purposes (UN,2017). While the government stated that the presence of security forces near schools was for the protection of the schools and students, the presence of armed forces in or near a school can make it a target of retaliatory attacks, increasing the risks to children and teachers, as well as the likelihood that education will be disrupted.

There is also a heightened risk that school buildings and infrastructure will be damaged or destroyed, that teaching and other supplies will be looted, and that both students and teaching staff will be too afraid to return to the school. The presence of such forces also increases the risk of sexual violence against female students and teachers. As a result, parents may feel compelled to pull their children out of school and are particularly likely to pull their daughters out of school as a preventive measure when armed forces are in or near schools. Aside these factors, many youth in the north are now taking advantage of current insurgency to commit more havoc. Some female students feel threatened as a result of rampant incidences of sexual abuse and rape in schools and the society (Akintunde, 2015.

IMPACTS OF INSECURITY ON GIRL CHILD EDUCATION IN THE NORTHERN PART OF NIGERIA

Insecurity has been identified as a significant challenge to the development of any society as a result of its inherent impact on educational sector and the society at large. Murray-Bruce (2013) opines that the falling levels of education can be linked to the insecurity in the country. According to Sanni (2015), The north-east region has been greatly affected by suicide bombing, kidnapping and attacks by militant groups, and particularly by the boko haram group which is responsible for the north-east part of Nigeria recording the highest levels of girl child illiteracy in the country. For a decade, the government and UNICEF have estimated that of the 8.7 Million to 13 Million primary school-aged children, 60 percent of them have been girls. The north eastern at the epicenter with nearly 75 percent of its girl child out of school (United State Institute of Peace,2021).

As the Nigerian society struggles to grasp with the realities of kidnapping, the horrors of the kidnap of schoolgirls remain fresh in the minds of the populace. The case of Leah Shaibu, one of the over 100 Nigerian Dapchi school girls who were abducted in March 2018 and still held by the Jihadist group after reportedly refused to convert to islam is one of the continuous reminders of the dangers and impact of girl-child kidnapping in Nigeria. This according to Bakwai et al (2014) has left some parent with no option of having their children uneducated rather than been kidnapped or dead. This potentially contributes to the over 6 million girls presently out of school (Obahopo & Arenyeka, 2014). According to Olugbode (2015) children now live in perpetual fear.
Although, poverty has long been an obstacle to education in northeastern Nigeria, insecurity has further exacerbated economic obstacles to education in the northeast. The Joint Education Needs Assessment reported that:

> "For girls, financial reasons are clearly the biggest barrier and especially significant

for senior secondary schools. In addition, the higher the security level, the more finance is a barrier. What is more, when parents are unable to afford the cost of education, families with few resources often prioritize education for sons over daughters".

According to Bassey, 2016, institution based insecurity leads to economic constraints. He stated that the needs of girls are more than those of boys. Therefore, girls from poor homes could find themselves constrained in meeting financial needs. This could pose psychological insecurity and force them to withdraw. Aside the abuses that female students and teachers have suffered during an attack on their schools and/or as a direct consequence of such an attack, there are also numerous risks for teenage girls who are not in school, including early marriage, early pregnancy, and lost opportunities for personal autonomy, employment, and economic independence. While these risks are not limited to girls who have survived attacks on education, girls who attended school prior to an attack are more vulnerable to such risks than they were before the attack.

Studies have shown that Nigeria had one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world with an estimated 62 percent of girls in northeastern Nigeria being married before their 18th birthday and 23.5 percent before their 15th birthday.

Although there is little concrete data on changes in the prevalence of early marriage due to the conflict, representatives of both national and international NGOs, as well as academics, interviewed by GCPEA believe that there is a clear trend of increased early marriage. As noted above, the tendency to marry girls at an early age is further exacerbated by attacks on schools that may result in parents taking their daughters out of school or girls themselves refusing to continue with their education due to safety concerns. GCPEA's interviews with young women and teachers underscored that being out of school, even for relatively short periods, increases the risk of early marriage for girls. Once married, girls often find it difficult to continue with their education, including due to household responsibilities or opposition from their husbands. Early pregnancy is a further impediment to continuing to attend school, as well as increasing the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), exposure to HIV, and a host of pregnancy-related complications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Protect female students and teachers. The government should take all appropriate measures consistent with Nigeria's responsibility under international humanitarian and human rights law to protect female students and teachers from abduction and violence and to obtain the immediate release of all who are still held captive by Boko Haram;
2) Government should conduct a thorough risk analysis for each school that is currently open to students. Include all types of education at all affected locations, prioritizing schools located in remote areas with female students. The risk analysis should identify possible threats to the school, students, teachers, and community members, and assess the probability of attack. Risk analyses should also assess vulnerabilities in school infrastructure, assess and map evacuation routes, and identify the adequacy of means to mitigate risks and vulnerabilities.
3) Massive community enlightenment campaigns on the importance of girl-child education should continue to be advocated for. This should go hand in hand with the promotion of effective school community relationship.
4) Government should facilitate the provision of secured school environment and arrange for security of the girls going to school and coming back home. This will encourage parents who are over protective of their children to allow their daughters go to school.
5) Government should allow for the provision of police outfit in basic primary schools particularly where the insecurity threat is very high. Communities can also play a good role by providing guards from among community vigilante groups.

CONCLUSION

The importance of Girl-child education lies in the proposition that women are foundation of any society. In the sense that despite the discrimination they face in the society, they remain major stakeholders in the agricultural, educational and

manufacturing industries. As the saying goes "when you educate a woman you educate a nation" this clearly exemplifies the importance of the girl child to the nation.

However, girl-child's access and inclusion in education have been limited by damage to school facilities, emotional disorders, forced marriage, unwanted pregnancy, fear, poverty and lack of teachers. All these have up shoots in insurgency and kidnapping that are products of insecurity, and immerse efforts should be placed on the safety of these girls when they seek basic education.

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About the Author

Adesola I. Olowokere is a Senior Research Fellow in the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) Abuja. She has a first degree in Political Science from the University of Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State and a Master of Art (M.A) in The Politics of Conflict and Violence from the University of Leicester (U.K). She is also member of the Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators. Mrs. Olowokere is currently a member of the Gender, Peace and Security Unit in the Institute as the Gender and Governance officer. She has publications in international and local journals on topics ranging from elections, social media usage etc. She enjoys travelling and reading.


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