

The Effect of War to the Nigerian Educational Activities: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

War is the leading cause of destruction to educational sector in Nigeria, in particular the primary and secondary school education system. The focused of this review is to examine how the war affects the entire educational system of Nigeria by leading to the prevalence of numerous problems that hinder the successful achievement for “Educational for All” and the new Millennium Development Goal. The exploration activities of related references on the effect of war were systematically guided by PRISMA Statement which consists of a 27-item checklist and a four-phase flow diagram. The Prisma Diagram Generator was also utilised to generate the process of scrutinising of the articles. The end results render Nigeria as backward and the poverty stricken nation that made it very difficult to support and sustain its educational sector according to global standard as enshrined by UNICEF

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970 and ethno-religious conflicts that took place in various regions such as the Ife and Modakeke in South Western Nigeria, Kaduna, Kano, Plateau, Taraba, and Tafawa Balewa, Tivi and Jukuncris in North Eastern and North Western part of Nigeria, the OPC in Lagos and the Ijaw and Itsekiri in South Eastern Nigeria. These conflicts with the exception of Boko Haram failed to provide enough qualitative or quantitative data exploring its detrimental effects on educational sector. These conflicts seem to be ethno-religious crises that spent few days not less than a week. The only war in Nigeria that last for three consecutive years excluding Boko Haram is Nigerian civil war from 6th July 1967 to 15th January. Ideally, the civil war should not brought high level of damages and atrocities on education sector particularly on students either at primary, secondary or tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It was enshrined as part of the regulation of the war not to attack schools and school children unless they are engaged in open hostility against the Federal Government Forces.

The only war that detrimentally affects the educational sector in Nigeria particularly in North Eastern part of the country is Boko Haram crisis. The main ideology of the Boko Haram sect is based on the belief that western education is forbidden and goes contrary to the teaching of Islam, as wrongly perceived and misinterpreted by Boko Haram followers. Based on this belief and ideology they devised various tactics and strategies of attacking, bombings and kidnapping of school children, especially girls. The quality of education in Borno state reduced drastically and facilitates the emergence of psychological problems among students, teachers and parents and educational administrators and supervisors.

This article is written in conjunction to exploring the effect of war on the Nigerian educational activities. Scattered studies have been identified discussing the effects, including the psychological problems among the victims, especially the children.

2. OBJECTIVE AND METHODS

This study aims at exploring the psychological problems prevailing as the results insurgency in Nigeria on educational activities as a whole, including the effects on the teachers, students, educational administrators and school facilities respectively. As for the start, the relevant studies from 2009 until 2017 were systematically scrutinized and searched engine on specific and limited to online data bases such as Ebsco, Sage Journal and Google scholar. The specific criteria of the search was also decided where articles which discusses educational effects and the prevailing psychological problems caused by the war within Nigerian context were included. The exploration activities were guided by PRISMA Statement which consists of a 27-item checklist and a four-phase flow diagram [1] to review related literatures systematically. The Prisma Diagram Generator was also utilised to generate the process of scrutinising of the articles. Out of this, the issues being discussed by the articles were presented.

3. RESULTS

A total of 10 eligible studies, most of these studies were carried out in qualitative forms expressing the psychological problems that results from the attacks on education more especially in Borno state of Nigeria. The results proved significant evidence of psychological problems such as emotional upset, shock, distress, withdrawal, truancy absenteeism, lateness, and lack of proper motivation on the side of teachers and students among the secondary school students of Borno state. It was also found the prevailing occurrences of sexually transmitted diseases, rape and unwanted pregnancy among the abducted girls in Chibok. The results failed to support the quantitative evidences on the following facts.

- Evidences on how psychological problems affect student's academic achievement.
- To what extent do psychological problems affect teachers' performance and job satisfaction?
- Gender differences in the level of psychological problems between male and female secondary school students of Borno state. It is undisputable fact that during the course of Boko Haram insurgency females and males secondary school students of Borno state were exposed to dangerous and various atrocities by Boko Haram members.
- Clear evidences on how the psychological problems of war affect the quality of education provided in Borno state.
- Evidence on how the school attacks affect students' enrolment figure in both primary and secondary school of Borno state.
- Perception of parents toward western education in Borno state.

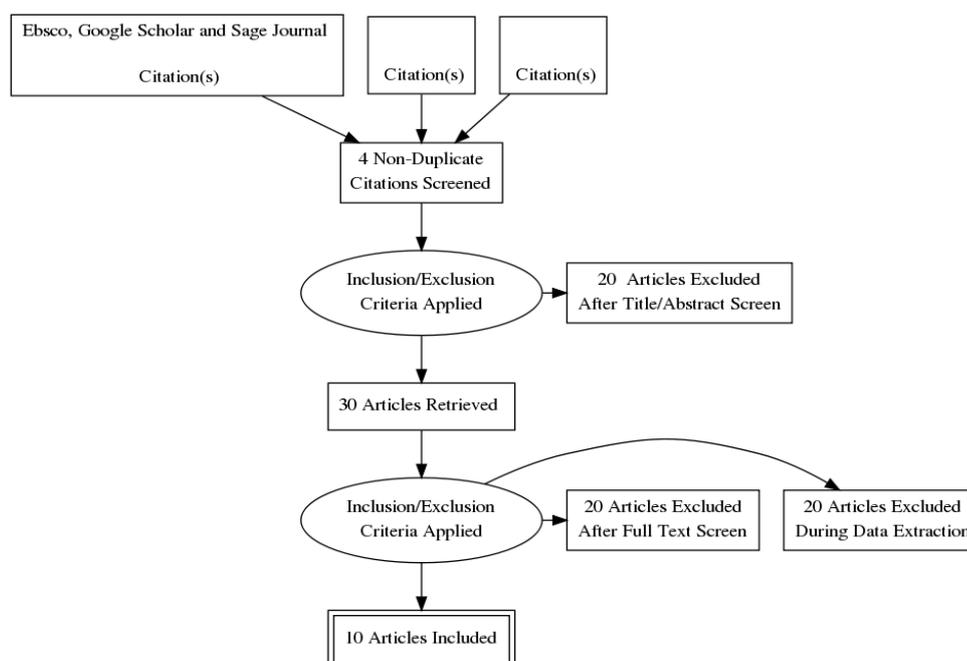


Figure 1. Prisma Flow Chart on the Effect of War to the Nigerian Educational Activities

4. DISCUSSIONS

It was found that the Boko Haram is an insurgent group in North Eastern Nigeria that employing organized terror to advance its objectives. In its early days, it was supported by al-Qaeda [2], and appears to have first become active in a noticeable way in 2002. Headquartered in an Islamic centre in Maiduguri, Borno State, it recruited combatants from the children of poor, dispossessed Nigerians, as well as Chadian and Nigerian children enrolled in its Islamic schools [3]

Borno State started encountering the global trend of insurgency from 2009 during the tenure of Umar Musa Yar'adua as the Nigeria's president. The crises led to the gruesome and ghastly killings, attacking and kidnapping innocent secondary school students. These developments greatly caused psychological problems and mental upset such as school-phobia, lateness, absenteeism, excessive fear and worries among innocent students/pupils of Borno state [4]. Since 2009, Boko Haram had completely destroyed the educational system in Borno State with huge negative effect on basic and secondary school education. The insurgent group disliked children attending schools, and also committed criminal offences ranging from kidnapping of school students and attacking teachers in schools [5]. More so, abduction of school children and the elderly were also common in their styles of mindless attack. The tactics employed by Boko Haram insurgents of attacking students/pupils and the teachers, the kidnapping of secondary school girls served as the pivotal factors in causing psychological problems among the victims.

The attacks on schools in Borno state instilled psychological problems particularly psychological distress, emotional upset, excessive fear, grief, and school-phobia among pupils/students and their teachers. Boko Haram has been burning and looting of schools since 2009. According to the National Emergency Management Agency, by January 2015, it was estimated that 254 schools had been burned down completely and 276 partially destroyed in the attacks in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states [6]. Borno state authorities under the State Ministry of Education realised a press conference report explaining the devastating effect of Boko Haram attacks on schools it was stated in the report that 512 primary schools, 38 secondary schools and 2 tertiary institutions in the state had been destroyed in the six year-long conflict [5].

It was also reported that the movement abducted nearly 300 girls being housed at the Government Secondary school Chibok [3]. Nearly three hundred girls, taking examinations at Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State, Nigeria, were abducted in the middle of the night on April 14, 2014, by Boko Haram insurgents pretending to be members of the Nigerian armed forces. The Chibok girls' abduction was the most audacious of several carried out by Boko Haram, and the largest number of abductions in one incident [3]. Those Chibok girls reported instances of rape, sexual slavery, exploitation in the militant group's camps, and inadequate access to reproductive health services in the Boko Haram camp. They additionally reported unwanted pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and also created psychological trauma [7]. Thousands of families have experienced death, forcible separation, maiming, dislocation, lack of security, and forced migration; and thousands of children have lost their parents through separation or death. Millions of children are out of school and millions are haunted by flashbacks of horrors, yet there is scant treatment for the psychological effects of trauma; many of these children manifest aggression, insomnia, duplicity, and sometimes despondency [8-9].

A 14-year-old student from Sabongari Primary School, Gwoza, described the fear that caused her to flee the town:

"One day in May 2013, a student found a letter and took it to our mathematics teacher. It was written in Hausa. When the teacher read the letter we all became frightened. He said it was from Boko Haram. The letter said all teaching activities must stop in the school or else we would all be abducted like the Chibok girls. The school was immediately shut down. I was at home for one year. Then two insurgents came to my house and told my mother they wanted to marry me. I became really scared that they would take me away like the Chibok girls. My mother and I escaped from the town immediately after the insurgents left" [3].

The conflict had negatively affected teachers and students from psychological points of views. The attacks teachers have faced from Boko Haram has had psychological effects that necessitated the prevailing of grief at the loss or maiming of their colleagues and students are distracted and destabilized by threats to colleagues and the schools are likely to be attacked by Boko Haram at any time in the day [10]. Teachers have experienced psychological problems which include symptoms of anxiety, depression, panic attacks, and even avoidant behaviours. This has made it difficult for many teachers to concentrate on their teaching profession and this negatively affect students' academic performances. The inability of teachers to concentrate and discharge their jobs led to the emergence of high records of truancy, absenteeism, lateness, and school phobia which negatively affected students' academic progress and success in areas that were seriously devastated by Boko Haram insurgents especially Gwoza, Bama, Mafa, Dikwa, Kala-Balge, Ngala, Marte, Abadam and

Mobbar [11]. The insurgents have also established partial control in parts of some local government areas in Borno, comprising Mungono, Kukawa, Guzamala, Gubio, Magumeri, Damboa, konduga, Chibok, AskiraUba and Jere [11]. In all these areas that were seriously devastated by Boko Haram insurgents the school were partially opened or totally closed for fear of attacks that may likely to emerge at any time. As reported by one teacher:

“Boko Haram came to the school to warn us. It was 8:30 in the morning. They gathered us all together. They were holding guns, nine men. They were wearing military uniforms, and they came on bikes, two per motorbike. They covered their heads and their eyes were exposed. They used red, black, or white scarves. The children became scared and ran out of the school. When they said if we would not stop teaching then they would kill us, we all agreed that we would stop and left the school. After that we stopped teaching completely. We never went back” [12].

Persistent attacks on schools and teachers deter students' and teachers' motivation and the success of any lesson depend on the amount of motivation derived from it. Similarly, the attacks are likely to expose the children and other teacher's psychological problems such as shock, distress, withdrawal, truancy absenteeism, lateness, emotional upset and to some extent severe psychological problem that may lead to clinical and medical attention.

The destruction and damage to classrooms, laboratories and other instructional materials that facilitate teaching and learning process in one way and in other way arouse students' interest reduce the quality of education provided in Borno and affect students participation, interest, and academic achievement. In some schools that were destroyed partially students from the same levels were group together of over hundred students/pupils in one single class and under the control of one single teacher. This negatively affects the psychological wellbeing of both students and teachers. Students over population in class bring into existence lack of class room management, feeling excessive worry, dissatisfaction and distraction.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Nigeria witnessed various conflicts, crises and inter-tribal war that seriously devastated the development of Nigeria as a peaceful country. The recent crisis of Boko Haram that is presently going on in some states of North Eastern Nigeria particularly Borno, Yobe and Adamawa affected the development of education at all level. The Sect that is popularly known as “Boko Haram ” are Hausa appellations which mean western education is prohibited. The sect considers western education as unlawful as a result of their misconception on western education the Sect carried out numerous attacks on schools across the country. The deadly attacks carried out by the sect in term of gunshot, suicide bombing and kidnapping and abducting as well as force recruitment of youth as child soldiers drastically affected the development of education in Nigeria. In short the activities of the sect reduce seriously the enrolment figure of both primary and secondary school students, reduce the quality of education provided in the affected states due to the shortage of teachers and lastly the war led to the prevailing of psychological problems such as truancy, absenteeism, school-phobia, lateness and many other psychological distress that affect the emotional well being of an individual student in Nigeria.

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