

The Psychological Trauma of Boko Haram Conflict On Secondary School Students in Borno State.

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to explore the impact of the psychological trauma in Borno as a result of Boko Haram insurgencies. Specifically, the objective of the study is to find out the Psychological Trauma affecting students' academic achievement as a result of Boko Haram insurgencies. The study is a descriptive survey.. Questionnaire and Academic achievement test would be developed and validated for data collection. Similarly to obtain more detail information observation techniques would be used in order to observe the nature of schools in Borno state. Data collected would be analysed using SPSS 20; Chi square test would be used as a statistical tool for analysing the students' responses on various kind of Trauma affecting the entire secondary school students of Borno state, and Co- relation would be employed to analyse the results obtained using academic achievement test in three core subjects that are offered as the core subjects by every secondary school students in Borno state. It is expected that the finding of this study will explore various psychological trauma affecting secondary school students of Borno and how these psychological trauma affecting their academic achievement. In line with the findings, recommendations would be made for improvement in the existing schools and restoring confidence and psychological well being among staff and students of Borno state.

Key words : Psychological trauma ,Secondary School Students

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Historically, Borno State, which was founded in 1976, initially comprised of the present Borno and Yobe States. Prior

to the advent of insurgency, it has been a relatively peaceful, multicultural and dynamic State in Nigeria. The State is fortunate to have human and natural resources, which have created many opportunities for its indigenes and other Nigerians to live in harmony.

Geographically, according to Borno State Government (BSG, 2012) the State is the largest State in Nigeria in terms of land mass territory which covers 69,435 square kilometers, which is located in the north eastern corner of Nigeria. Educationally, the State is a center for education to all its international and national neighbours such as the northern part of Cameroun, the southern part of Chad and Republic of Niger. Many students from Adamawa, Gombe and Yobe State in Nigeria had also benefited from the State basic education program. The major tribe in Borno State is called “Kanuri” which constitute the higher hierarchy in the management of basic education in the state. Occupationally, majority of the people in Borno state are famers, fishermen and herdsman but also send their children to the basic schools. The State has university known as University of Maiduguri, a polytechnic, colleges of education, many senior secondary schools as well as many basic schools.

Borno State started experiencing the global trend of insurgency from 2009).

Which led to the gruesome killings of innocent Nigerian citizens perpetrated by an insurgent group called Boko Haram (Adamu, 2014). Since 2009, Boko Haram had disrupted 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 pupils and attacking teachers in schools (Adeyemi, 2014). There is major destruction of school activities in the state. Recent past, they used under-age girls to carry out suicide bombings of major shopping malls, cinema halls and bus station. Moreso, Abduction of school children and the elderly were also common in their styles of mindless attack.

Nigeria has had a long and unfortunate history of communal conflicts and ethno religious violence. For example, in Plateau state, in Nigeria’s “middle belt,” there have been many outbreaks of bloody violence between different communities since the return of democracy in 1999. There have also been riots in the urban centres of Kaduna and Kano, and for several decades there has been a simmering conflict in the Tafawa Balewa district of Bauchi (Walker 2012). The Northern Nigeria in particular had witnessed a religious conflict in 1980s

known as Maitatsine crisis, which caused havoc in major cities of Northern Nigeria. Muhammad Marwa was an Islamic scholar who migrated from the town of Marwa in Northern Cameroun to the city of Kano in 1945. While in Kano he became an Islamic zealot concerned with the purification of Islam. He believed that Islam had been corrupted by modernization (Westernization) and the formation of the modern state. His constant preaching became very abusive and provocative, especially against established institutions like the emirate and the political class to the extent that the then Emir of Kano, Alhaji Sanusi Lamido, expelled him from Kano. Marwa found his way back to Kano in 1966, presumably after the death of Alhaji Sanusi. Between 1972 and 1979 Marwa was detained in prison several times for his provocative preaching and acts of lawlessness against the state (Danjibo 2009).

There is a growing suspicion among Nigerians about the real identity and motive of *Boko Haram* sect. Most Muslims see it as an extension of Maitatsine sect which was established in 1945 to transport turmoil to Islam as it was confirmed that Maitatsine was not a Muslim until his death, while a reasonable number of Christians see it as an attempt to Islamize Nigerians while some are indifferent (Shehu 2014).

Boko Haram is an Islamic sect like Maitatsine sect of 1980 believes that northern politics has been seized by a group of corrupt, false Muslims. It wants to wage a war against them, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria generally, to create a “pure” Islamic state ruled by Sharia Laws (Walker 2012).

According to Shuaibu, Salleh, and Shehu (2015), *Jama'ah al-Ahlu al-Sunnah Li al-Da'wah wa al-Jihad* known as, *Boko Haram* in Hausa which means Western education is forbidden emerged around 2002 as a peaceful local Salafist Islamic movement whose original aim was preaching and assisting the needy. The activities of *Boko Haram* took violent dimension in 2009 and Nigerian security forces, clashed with the group violent that resulted in the death of its leader Muhammad Yusuf and many of his followers (Umar 2012). Since 2009 *Boko Haram* has been driven by a desire for vengeance against politicians, police, and Islamic authorities for their role in a brutal suppression of the group that year (Walker 2012).

Furthermore, the activities and attacks from the group has escalated in 2013, as a result, the Federal Government declared a state of emergency in the three most affected states of the region in May 2013, (Blanchard 2014). The *Boko Haram* adopted new tactics of kidnapping female

students and women and attacking schools with the aims of achieving their mission as “Western education is forbidden” in the north-eastern part of the country. These attacks have targeted and killed teachers, education workers and students. At least 611 teachers have been killed and a further 19,000 have been forced to flee since 2009. More than 2,000 people, many of them female, have been abducted by the group, many from their schools from the beginning of the conflict. Thousands more students and teachers have been injured, some in deadly suicide bombs in the same period. Between 2009 and 2015, attacks in north-eastern Nigeria destroyed more than 910 schools and forced at least 1,500 to close. By early 2016, an estimated 952,029 school-age children had fled the violence. They have little or no access to education, likely blighting their future for years to come. (2015 Bede Sheppard/Human Rights Watch). The group’s brutal insurgency has affected every strata of life in Nigeria’s northeast, including education, which has become the fault line of the conflict.

Theoretical framework of the study

This study adopted the theory of Lev Vygotsky (1978) social constructivism theory. Vygotsky theories stress the fundamental role of social interaction in cognitive development of a child. Vygotsky believed that the role of the

teacher in education is crucial. In developing children abilities, teachers can guide them towards performing tasks which are just beyond their current capacity. With such guidance, children can perform beyond their own ability within certain limits. Vygotsky defined these limits as the zone of proximal development. Based on the fact that learning and development in Borno State, should be the collaborative activities between the society and school. Vygotsky believed that, community plays a central role in the process of making meaning to children cognitive development. The attention and memory capacity of children are transformed by vital cognitive tools provided by culture, such as history, traditions, language, religion and social context. Learning occurs, when the child first makes contact with the social environment on an interpersonal level and then internalizes this experience. This means that, what the child is able to do in collaboration today, the child will be able to do independently tomorrow. Vygotsky (1978) posited that, culture gives the child the cognitive tool needed for development. This makes the study to lend its credence on Vygotsky social constructivism theory because of its significance to culture and social context.

Statement of problem

Boko Haram's repeated attacks on schools in the northeast of Nigeria have insurmountable obstacles to learning for large number of students'. The psychosocial impact will affect children's ability to learn, and where the threat of attacks persists may lead to their(pupils/students) being kept at home from school, even if the school remains open. Such obstacles to access to education can result in severe developmental problems which result in psychological trauma.

Teachers may also experience psychological effects such as grief at the loss or maiming of their colleagues and students or threats to colleagues, making it difficult for them to support their students or perform their jobs to the highest standards. Fear may cause teachers to stay away from school for long periods, forcing schools closure or preventing their resumption after attacks.

The social effects of Boko Haram attacks have both symbolic and ideological effects on education which exacerbate the physical effects. According to Vernor Munoz (2009), the symbolic effect is the promulgation of fear/subordination to others and the ideological effects is the removal of the right to education and the denial of its purpose. The destruction of

large numbers of schools or sexual violence against schoolgirls is a rejection of the right of women. The result can be downgrading of women's position in society and a widespread abandonment of education by students, teachers and governments. The consequent dilapidation and collapse of educational infrastructure and dwindling of expertise can fuel loss of faith in government and setbacks in development.

The attack on innocent school Children traumatizes them. There is the problem of how to care traumatized school children and win them back to the school. The school children who escaped death by the skin of their teeth, sustained serious injuries or saw his classmate mowed down in a rain of bullets may not find it easy to pack their bag and run back to school as soon it is re-opened. If the school children, out of fear refuse to go back to school, it will be disastrous for education in Nigeria. Again traumatized incidents can make students to suffer both physical and psychological damages that impair their ability to learn. Bremmer et al. (1996) found that victims of psychological dramatization had lower memory volume in the left-brain (Hippocampal) area than did the non-abused. These students may show a change in school performance, impaired attention and low concentration and more school absences.

Many Psychologically traumatized children fail in school, and failure can take many forms. Children can externalize their difficulties in emotions/behaviours and find themselves in constant trouble.

Objectives of the study.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the psychological trauma concomitant to Boko Haram crises on secondary school student's academic performance in Borno State of Nigeria. The research is carried out to achieve the following objectives:

- I. To bring to the fore, the kinds of psychological trauma that the secondary school students of Borno went through as a result of Boko Haram crises.
- II. To find out the impact of Psychological trauma on students' academic achievement.
- III. To find out the gender differences in the level of Psychological traumatic experiences of secondary schools students in Borno State of Nigeria

Research hypothesis

The following research hypothesis was formulated to guide the conduct of this study:

- I. There will be no statistically significant psychological trauma experienced by secondary school students of Borno State of Nigeria.

- II. There will be no statistically significant impact of Psychological trauma on secondary school students' academic achievement in Borno State of Nigeria.
- III. There will be no statistically significant gender differences in the level of psychological traumatic experiences of male and female secondary school students in Borno state.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions developed to guide the successful conduct of the study:

- I. What are the kinds of Psychological trauma experienced by secondary school students of Borno state as a result of Boko Haram crises in Borno state of Nigeria?
- II What are the impacts of the psychological trauma on secondary school students' academic achievement in Borno State of Nigeria?
- III Are there any significant gender differences in the level of psychological traumatic experiences of male and female secondary school students in Borno state?

METHODOLOGY

The study is a descriptive survey. It is intended to find out the impact of

Psychological Trauma on student academic performance as a result of Boko Haram crisis in Borno state. The population of the study consisted of students of all secondary schools in Borno including those are displaced. There are thirty six senior secondary schools in Borno. A total number of 200 students drawn from ten secondary schools would be used as the population of the study. Sampling technique used for this study was stage sampling. This sampling technique is a means of obtaining the require sample when enumerating of all members of population to select a sample from among them is extremely difficult or impossible when the population is large or when it is spread over a large area.. Two types of instruments would be used for data collection. The first one Traumatic Event Checklist he second instrument to be used for data collection is Academic Achievement Test in three core subjects (Biology, English and Mathematics) that are offered as compulsory subjects by every senior secondary school students in Borno. The result obtained or scored by the students were co-related with their previous performances in order to make judgments on the influence of traumatic events on their academic achievement. The checklist was evaluated by experts in Psychology, Test and measurement as well as educational administrators who

scrutinized them and made useful observations and corrections. The reliability of the two instruments would be obtained through a pilot testing using 20 % obtained from the samples. The samples would be drawn from senior secondary school with 10 subjects from each. The instruments would be administered once to the groups after which obtained scores in the academic achievement would be correlated between students from the two set of scores using PPM. The result of the analysis revealed that the values of the calculated $r=0.66$, 0.68 and 0.65 as for English, Mathematics and Biology. The reliability of the students' assessment for teachers' effectiveness is 0.66 .

Results

The results of this study as explained in the method of data analysis is presented in a form of descriptive statistics using simple percentage to find out students exposure to traumatic events using Traumatic Events Checklist and then to employ the use of relevant statistical tools to find out the impact of psychological trauma on students Academic Achievement and gender in the level of psychological trauma between male and female Secondary School students of Borno state.

Hypothesis one. There will be no statistically significant events that provoke

psychological trauma among secondary school students of Borno State of Nigeria.

All participants were asked whether they had been exposed at any point during the Boko Haram crisis to one or more of a list of 25TEs (yes/no), based on the media reports about the Traumatic events

prevailing in Borno states during the Boko Haram Insurgency. We tabulate the 25 TEs in a tabular form as follow: Destruction of life and properties, stay in IDP camp, detecting the dead body, witnessing insult such as beaten and sexual assault etc.

Table 4.1 Number of traumatic experiences and their frequency. (N=200)

S/N	ITEM	YES	%	NO	%	TOTAL
1	Saw people property being destroyed	176	88	24	12	100%
2	Saw armed	182	91	18	09	100%
3	Heard people crying for help	145	72.5	55	27.5	100%
4	Parent was killed	47	23.5	153	76.5	100%
5	Brother or sister was killed	21	10.5	189	94.5	100%
6	Other relatives killed	142	71	58	29	100%
7	Relative injured	127	63.5	73	26,5	100%
8	Brother or sister injured	134	67	66	23	100%
9	Someone knowing to you was injured(not a relative)	155	77.5	45	23.5	100%
10	Friend was killed	27	13.5	173	86.5	100%
11	Some known to you disappeared (not a relative)	88	44	122	56	100%
12	Parent disappeared	25	12.5	175	87.5	100%
13	Have a relative who disappeared	49	24.5	151	75.5	100%
14	A friend who disappeared	39	19.5	161	89.5	100%
15	Displaced from home	127	63.5	73	26.5	100%
16	Stayed in IDP camp	102	51	98	49	100%
17	Went without food for long hours	101	50.5	99	49.5	100%
18	Stopped going to school for sometime	142	71	68	29	100%
19	Slept in the cold	111	55.5	49.5	44.5	100%
20	Someone known to you was killed (not a relative)	103	51.5	97	48.5	100%
21	Saw property being looted	146	73	54	27	100%
22	Detected small of dead bodies	153	76.5	47	23.5	100%
23	Saw people being beaten	111	55.5	53.5		100%
24	Saw people sleeping in the cold	101	50.5	99	49.5	100%
25	Heard yells of gangs as they attacked people	102	51	98	49	100%

Psychological trauma symptoms were assessed using the Traumatic Events Checklist (TEC). The table above stated

clearly the frequency of each traumatic event as responded by secondary school students of Borno state in areas that are

prone to Boko Haram crisis. These are clearly are clearly presented: saw people property being destroyed (88%), saw armed, (91%) heard people crying for help (72.5%) parent was killed (23.5%) brother or sister was killed (10.5%) Other relatives killed (58%) Relative injured (63.5) Brother or sister injured (67%) Other relatives killed (71%) Brother or sister injured (67%) Someone knowing to you was injured (not a relative) (77.5%) Friend was killed (13.5%) Some known to you disappeared (not a relative) (44%) Parent disappeared (12.5%) Have a relative who disappeared (24.5%) A friend who disappeared (19.5%) Displaced from home

(63.5) Stayed in IDP camp (51%) Went without food for long hours (50.5%) Stopped going to school for sometime (71%) Slept in the cold (55.5%) Someone known to you was killed (not a relative) (71%) Saw property being looted (73%) Detected small of dead bodies (76.5%) Saw people being beaten (55.5%) Saw people sleeping in the cold (50.5) Heard yells of gangs as they attacked people (51%)

Hypothesis 2. There will be no statistically significant impact of Psychological trauma on secondary school students’ academic achievement in Borno State of Nigeria.

Table 4.2 T test Analysis of the Impact of Psychological Trauma on student’s academic achievement

VARIABLE	N	Mean	SD	SE	Df	t	Decision
STUDENTS RESULTS BEFORE BOKO HARAM	100	2.44	2.9773	2.10	199	4.14	Rejected
STUDENTS RESULTS DURING BOKO HARAM	100	1.50	.501	.035			

From the table I it can be observed that the obtained t value (4.144) is greater than the critical t value (1.96000).Therefore null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that there is significant influence of psychological trauma on students academic achievement as a result of Boko Haram insurgency in Borno state.

Hypothesis 3: There will be no statistically significant gender

differences in the level of psychological traumatic experiences of male and female secondary school students in Borno state.

Table 4.3 T test analysis for gender differences in the level of psychological trauma between male and female secondary school students of Borno state

variable	Mean	Std D	pop	Df	T cal	T crit	D
male	5.63	.801	100	199	11.10	1.9600	Rejected
female	3.14	.603	100				

From the table III it can be observed that the obtained t value (11.10) is greater than the critical t value (1.9600). Therefore null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that there is significant gender differences in the level of psychological trauma between male and female Secondary School students of Borno State.

Discussion on findings

The long-term effects of war depend on a complex interaction of different factors that include demographic considerations and the specific nature of the individual's war experiences (Gros et al., 2011). In general, research on combat veterans and other survivors of traumatic experiences found that more time spent in potential danger can lead to higher levels of PTSD symptomatology in childhood and adulthood (e.g., Norris et al., 2003.) Experiencing a traumatic event may lead to other symptoms or impairment; not just PTSD symptoms. Specifically, the impact of trauma during youth is associated with symptoms or diagnoses of other psychiatric disorders. Findings from a sample of traumatized youth aged 7 to 16 suggest that the expression of posttraumatic stress symptoms is often associated with symptoms or diagnoses of separation anxiety or specific phobia

(Keppel-Benson et al., 2002). Research regarding youth with histories of abuse also supports the association between PTSD symptoms and symptoms of other anxiety disorders. Examination of the prevalence of psychiatric disorders in a sample of youth with histories of physical abuse, sexual abuse, or both, suggests that approximately 50% of these youth (N=204) report high symptom levels of separation anxiety disorder (Ackerman et al., 1998).

The magnitude of change in traumatic event reports was much larger in women than men, which may be due to women reporting more events when specifically prompted for them. Other studies have reported higher rates of sexual assault when potential traumatic events were described in specific behavioral terms, as opposed to approaches using more general terms (Resnick, Kilpatrick, Dansky, Saunders, & Best, 1993). The increase in rates of PTSD in the present study is due almost entirely to the effect of the TLEQ on diagnostic cases of PTSD in women. With a greater number of events identified on the TLEQ, women simply had more events to choose from for further PTSD evaluation than men. In addition, women reported greater exposure overall to events that carry higher risk for PTSD,

particularly sexual assault. As noted by others, other factors that remain undetected likely contribute to an independent gender-related risk of PTSD (Breslau, 2002). The failure to use a comprehensive and more behaviorally-specific multiple-item traumatic event measure will likely result in fewer reports of potential traumatic events and a correspondingly lower prevalence of PTSD in women.

Civilian women and girls face different risks and dangers in armed conflict compared to those faced by civilian men and boys. This is clear indication that the level of traumatized women and girls in most conflict out number than boys. Throughout the genocide that, took place in various part of the globe women and girls are targeted by opposing groups, not only as an attack against these females, but as a means to exercise power over and demoralize the men in the women's family, clan and ethnic group. These incidences helped tremendously to cause psychological trauma more especially among women and adolescent girl. The difference in the level of psychological trauma have been supported by the number of studies such (Ido 2014), (Daniel 2014), (Satubo, 2014) who expressed that in time of crises there is difference in the level of psychological trauma experience by male and female due to psychological and biological nature of female.

Youths who experience high levels of victimization in any setting are more likely to experience clinical levels of psychological trauma, such as anger, depression, anxiety, and dissociation (Flannery et al., 2001). Higher levels of anger and depression increase students' risk for self-harming behavior and the perpetration of violence against others (Flannery et al., 2001). Mental-health issues and a fear of exposure to violence and victimization may impact students' behavior at school and their academic performance. Students have reported academic problems and an inability to learn in school (Hazler, 1996; Hoover & Oliver, 1996), and some students have even refused to go to school at all because of harassment and violence that occurs in the school setting (Cullingford & Morrison, 1995). It is hard to concentrate on academic subjects unrelated to daily life when students are constantly worrying about the next time they will be harassed, what they can do to get revenge on their tormentor, or if they will become the next victim. Students may become withdrawn, isolated, or inattentive in class. These effects will negatively impact their motivation and ability to learn, as well as their socialization with peers and the quality of their relationships with adults at their school. Harper and Ibrahim (1999) suggested violence by quiet and withdrawn youths might be driven by a constant feeling

of psychological hurt or isolation, followed by an impulse to hurt the world or those that are believed to be responsible for the pain.

Conclusions

Boko Haram's activities in the past five years demonstrate the urgent need to address youth radicalization and religious extremism in northern Nigeria, as they have resulted in the destruction of private and public property, grievous bodily injury and death, and the displacement of thousands of people. The immediate impact of attacks include the loss of, injury to, or abduction of students, teachers and personnel and damage of buildings and facilities most typically due to the burning, bombing or shelling of buildings or transport facilities by Boko Haram.

The study evaluates the psychological trauma prevailing in Borno state as a result of Boko Haram insurgency. Exposure to violence in any setting (i.e., home, community, or school) tends to have serious behavioural and mental-health consequences for children, both as witnesses and as victims. Despite this recognition, little research has focused on the impact of violence exposure in school, a place where children spend a great deal of their time and where significant socialization and learning occurs. The earlier a child is exposed to violence, the greater the potential long-term consequences.

Accumulating evidence indicates that exposure to violent traumatic events, such as terrorism, random school shootings, and community traumatic events in general have deleterious impacts on the health and well-being of children, reflected by depression, aggressive behaviour, anxiety and stress, social and emotional problems, and impaired cognitive development

Recommendations

- The state government should provide adequate security to prevent attacks on school buildings, teachers and school children in the state.
- The state government should renovate all schools damaged in the state as a result of the violence and ensure that they are provided with adequate teaching staff and other resources in order that children's access to education can be resumed as quickly and smoothly as possible.
- The federal government on their part should provide adequate support to the affected states government including Borno state, to expeditiously rebuild and renovate all school buildings and facilities destroyed during the attacks.
- The State government should provide all necessary support to all

those, including teachers and students, who have been affected by violence in northeast Nigeria. This should include rehabilitation and resettlement for those who have been forced to flee the violence.

- The federal government should take effective and lawful measures to prevent unlawful killings, particularly those of teachers and students, as well as attacks on schools by Boko Haram and other armed groups in northern Nigeria
- The Ministry of Education should ensure that re-opened schools are subjected to regular inspection to ensure that standards are being maintained.
- The international communities should put pressure on the Nigeria authorities to conduct an independent investigation and prosecution of suspected perpetrators of human rights abuses including the abuse of the right to education
- The study is also calling on Boko Haram and other armed groups to cease all unlawful killings, including targeted attacks on teachers, school children and other human right abuses against civilians and immediately stop all

attacks on schools and other education facilities.

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