



Effect of Armed Banditry and Insecurity on Nigeria's Educational System

Musa Salihu Omuya

Social Sciences Department, Kaduna Polytechnic, Nigeria

Corresponding email: musalihu68.mo@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of armed banditry and kidnapping on Nigeria's educational system. Utilizing the qualitative exploratory study, the research reveals that widespread youth unemployment, poverty, corruption, and a decline in societal values contribute significantly to the surge in violent crimes targeting schools and educational personnel. Findings indicate a systemic undermining factors in Nigeria's educational development arising from attack on schools infrastructure, psychological trauma among learners, educators and parents, disruption of academic calendar, and economic liability of ransom payment. The study underscores the urgent need for comprehensive reforms, including the adoption of community policing, stringent legal measures against perpetrators, and the promotion of cultural and religious values to foster peace and unity. Recommendations also emphasize inclusive governance, job creation, enhanced security measures, and localization of schools to mitigate the menace of kidnapping and terrorism and revitalize Nigeria's educational sector.

Keywords: Armed Banditry, Educational System, Insecurity, School Abductions, Out-of-School Children

Introduction

The escalation of armed banditry in Nigeria has become a focal point in recent scholarly discussions, predominantly through historical reviews of cattle rustling and gold mining in the north-west and other regions (Ogbonaya, 2020). Criminal syndicates engaging in cattle theft and the illicit competition over natural resources, such as gold, by non-state actors have fostered an environment conducive to the proliferation of armed banditry (Sahara Reporter, 2021 September 7). Scholarly debates have primarily centered on the role of Fulani pastoralists as key actors in armed banditry, the various actors involved in this crisis, and its far-reaching repercussions on food security, socio-economic, and political landscapes (Sahara Reporter, 2021 September 7; George, 2021).

This article departs from the prevailing narratives to explore the broader impact of armed banditry on Nigeria's educational system. In doing so, the study examines the forces of terror, shedding light on the multifaceted threats posed by armed banditry and its implications for the uninterrupted development of education in Nigeria. Recent incidents underscore the urgency of this investigation. As of April 17, 2022, eleven students from the Federal Government Girls College in Yauri, Kebbi



State, remained in captivity following their abduction by the notorious banditry kingpin, Dogo Gide. Their school, FGGC Birnin Yauri, was raided on June 17, 2021, resulting in dozens of students and five teachers being abducted from this federal government-owned boarding school. Despite multiple ransom payments and prisoner exchanges, the 11 schoolgirls remain in captivity ((Vanguard, 2022 February 27; Abubakar et al., 2023).

A distressing revelation from a Daily Trust exclusive report dated February 21 indicated that approximately 13 of the abducted female students were forcibly married off to bandits, with some already bearing children. Concurrently, marking the 10th-month anniversary of the abductions of students from FGGC Birnin Yauri and the 109 Chibok students who remain in captivity, another group of five students from Zamfara State College of Health Technology, Tsafe, were abducted from their private hostels in Tsafe, Zamfara State. Fortunately, they were released shortly after a ransom was paid (Daily Trust, May 24, 2021; Abubakar et al., 2023).

The increasing prevalence of armed banditry and insecurity in Nigeria poses significant threats to the nation's stability and socio-economic development. One critical sector profoundly affected by this insecurity is the educational system (Abubakar, et al., 2023). Persistent attacks on educational institutions, teachers, and students have led to the disruption of learning, decreased enrollment rates, and a decline in the rural quality of education. Furthermore, the broader socio-economic implications of these security challenges have far-reaching consequences for the future of Nigeria's youth and the nation's overall development trajectory.

Given the pivotal role of education in national development and the urgent need to address the growing security concerns, this study seeks to explore and understand the multifaceted impacts of armed banditry and insecurity on Nigeria's educational system. By identifying the challenges faced by educational stakeholders and assessing the socio-economic and political implications of the prevailing security situation, this research aims to provide valuable insights that can inform policy interventions and strategies to safeguard and enhance the resilience of Nigeria's educational sector amidst pervasive insecurity.

Utilizing secondary sources of data, the article employs a qualitative-dominant analytical approach. The study employs a qualitative research design, utilizing a documentary analysis approach to gather and analyze data. It relies on the existing literature, reports, and studies on terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping in Nigeria sourced from various reliable and credible publications, including academic journals, government reports, international organization reports, and news articles. The subsequent sections of this paper elucidate the conceptual framework, the history and causes of armed banditry, and the intersection of armed banditry and educational system in Nigeria. The discussion delves into the security implications of armed banditry attacks on the educational system, culminating in the concluding remarks.

Conceptual Clarification

Armed banditry is characterized by organized criminal activities aimed at attacking, killing, kidnapping, and extorting innocent citizens while destroying their properties and rustling their cattle (Egwu, 2016; Uche & Chijioke, 2018). Motivated primarily by economic opportunities, armed



banditry is perpetrated by syndicate groups engaged in intimidation, dispossession, and violence against civilians (Udoma, 2013). These criminal gangs, referred to as armed bandits, terrorize local populations and travelers, seizing valuable possessions such as money, merchandise, livestock, and other assets. The manifestations of armed banditry include cattle rustling, attacks, kidnappings, ransom demands, and sexual violence against victims (Abdullahi, 2019). Operating as non-state armed groups, armed bandits exploit societal grievances, resource competition, social displacement, unfavorable government policies, and marginalization to terrorize civilians (Ojo, et al., 2023).

Various typologies of armed banditry exist, including social, rural-urban frontier, countryside, mercenary, organized, maritime, and petty banditry. Triggered by relative deprivation, social inequalities, and grievances, these categories differ in their operational contexts and dynamics. For instance, mercenary banditry can be characterized by a master–servant relationship, while organized banditry operates transnationally with a structured network and command (Egwu, 2016). Armed bandits predominantly inhabit ungoverned or under-governed spaces, such as remote areas and forest enclaves, where government presence is minimal or absent (Ojo, 2020). These environments provide operational advantages for armed bandits, who often target rural communities, border areas, and less populated regions along major roads or waterways (Shalangwa, 2013). As a result, the primary victims of armed banditry are innocent citizens residing in or traveling through remote parts of the country.

While armed bandits typically maintain anonymity, they openly commit violent crimes, reflecting a tactic used by common criminals who view theft as a means to private ends. However, contemporary evidence indicates increasing gender diversity in armed banditry, challenging the traditional patriarchal view and recognizing women's involvement in intelligence, counterintelligence, and logistics (Ojo, et al., 2023). From a security perspective, armed banditry extends beyond traditional notions of national security to include human security. Human security emphasizes the protection of individuals and communities from various threats, encompassing personal, environmental, health, political, and economic dimensions. Consequently, armed banditry poses significant threats to both national and human security in Nigeria, impacting the welfare of the general populace and undermining the state's capacity to enforce internal security and maintain peace (Abubakar, et al., 2023).

The educational system refers to the structured and organized framework within which learning and teaching take place in a society. It encompasses various institutions, policies, and processes designed to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes among individuals. According to Trow (2007), an educational system is a "complex set of practices, mechanisms, and institutions by which formal learning is organized and managed in society" (Trow, 2007: 52). This system is not limited to schools and universities but extends to informal settings, such as family, community, and workplace, which collectively contribute to the holistic development of individuals and the society at large. The educational system plays a pivotal role in shaping the intellectual, social, and moral fabric of a nation, serving as a catalyst for socio-economic development, cultural preservation, and civic engagement (UNESCO, 2015).



Operationally, the educational system can be understood as a network of educational institutions, programs, curricula, and policies that are designed and implemented to meet the learning needs of individuals at various stages of their lives. It encompasses both formal education, which includes primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, and non-formal and informal education, such as vocational training, adult literacy programs, and community-based learning initiatives (OECD, 2019). The operational dimensions of the educational system involve the planning, organization, and delivery of educational services, the development and implementation of curricula and instructional materials, the recruitment and training of educators, and the assessment and evaluation of learning outcomes. Furthermore, the educational system is influenced by various stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, teachers, students, parents, and the broader community, each playing a critical role in its functioning and effectiveness (Odumbo, et al., 2017).

The conceptual understanding emphasizes the broader societal goals and values of education, such as equity, inclusivity, and lifelong learning, which inform the design and implementation of educational policies and practices (Freeman, 2006). Additionally, the operational meaning focuses on the practical aspects of delivering education, translating the conceptual principles into actionable strategies and activities to achieve the desired learning outcomes. Therefore, the educational system can be viewed as a dynamic and evolving entity, shaped by both its conceptual foundations and operational practices, working in tandem to foster individual development, social cohesion, and national progress (Freeman, 2006).

Recent School Abductions in Nigeria

The spate of abductions commenced on December 11, 2020, with the kidnapping of 344 male students from Government Science Secondary School, Kankara, Katsina State. This was followed by the abduction of 80 pupils from an Islamiyya School in Mahuta, Kaduna State, on December 20, 2020. Subsequent incidents included the abduction of 27 students from Government Science College Kagara, Niger State, on February 17, 2021 (Premium Times, December, 2021), and 279 girls from Government Secondary School Jangebe, Zamfara State, on February 26, 2021. The Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation, Afaka, Kaduna State, also reported the kidnapping of 39 students on March 11, 2021, and another 23 students were abducted from Greenfield University, Kaduna State, on March 20, 2021. Furthermore, three students were kidnapped from the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State, on April 24, 2021 (Abubakar, et al., 2023).

While some of the abducted students were eventually released, the tragedy of the Greenfield University students—Dorothy Yohanna, Precious Nwakacha, Sadiq Muazu, and Benjamin Habila—remains poignant as they tragically lost their lives (Premium Times, May 29, 2021)). Families of the abducted students faced the dual ordeal of relief and financial burden due to the significant ransoms they had to pay.

Contrary to the perception that such abductions are confined to Northern Nigeria, previous incidents in the South also underline the nationwide spread of this issue. In 2016, gunmen abducted three schoolgirls from Babington Macaulay Junior Seminary, Lagos, and eight months later, armed men kidnapped the vice-principal, a teacher, and four pupils from Igbonla Model College, Epe, Lagos State (Nigeria Observer News (Jul7 7, 2023)). However, the North has been more severely affected



since the advent of Boko Haram attacks on schools. Despite the government's assurances, only a few bandits have been apprehended and prosecuted, suggesting that banditry has become a lucrative enterprise in Nigeria (Premium Times, December, 2021).

Historically, the origins of kidnapping for ransom can be traced back to Europe around 1673 or 1874. In Nigeria, kidnapping has evolved into a lucrative criminal enterprise since the onset of the Fourth Republic (Dodo, 2010). Evidence indicates that the Fourth Republic has witnessed significant disruptions and interference in Nigeria's educational system by militants, terrorists, and kidnappers, with recent upsurges in attacks on schools and abductions of both teachers and students (Premium Times, December, 2021).

Various groups have different motivations for these attacks: for the Niger Delta and Eastern Nigeria militants, it is a business venture; for Boko Haram, it is an attempt to discourage Western education; for herdsmen, it is a means to raise funds for arms; for Islamic fundamentalists, it is a means to exert pressure on authorities; for miscreants in the southwest, it is a form of protest; and for ritualists, victims are seen as sacrifices (The Defense Post, 2021 March 4).

Historical Background of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Kidnapping, the act of abducting individuals for ransom, has long been a criminal activity with various motives, including economic, social, and political reasons. The term "kidnap" originates from the seventeenth-century English practice of seizing children and transporting them as slaves to American colonies (Uzorma & Nwanegbo-Ben, 2014). In pre-colonial Nigeria, kidnapping was associated with money-making rituals, traditions, and religious purposes, often involving the sacrifice of victims to deities or as part of burial rites for kings (Nigeria Observer News, Jul7 7, 2023).

During this period, the kidnappers, often referred to as gbomo-gbomo, were more feared than armed robbers due to their use of charms to bewitch, entice, or hypnotize their victims (Vanguard, November 6, 2020). Victims were typically young individuals who were killed, and their organs were sometimes severed for ritual purposes. Ritualists preferred physically impaired individuals, such as hunchbacks, albinos, and imbeciles, as their victims (Bello & Jamilu, 2017).

In the context of interethnic wars, religious conflicts, civil wars, slavery, and the slave trade era in pre-colonial Nigeria, kidnapping was rampant, with villages and towns raided and adults and children abducted to be used as domestic slaves, conscripted into armies, or sold into slavery. In colonial Nigeria, the Ekunmeku Movement in Asaba, present-day Delta State, engaged in kidnapping for ransom by abducting officials of the Royal Nigeria Company between the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Christopher, 2011). This criminal act later became a lucrative business in the Niger Delta and spread to other parts of the country.

During the post-colonial period, the first recorded case of kidnapping for financial gain occurred in the 1970s during the oil boom, carried out by criminal gangs in the Niger Delta who abducted expatriate oil workers for ransom. Since 1999, kidnapping has intensified, initially targeting foreign nationals working for multinational corporations and later diverting attention to indigenous Nigerians (Vanguard, November 6, 2020). Victims now include individuals from all social, cultural,



ethnic, and economic backgrounds, ranging from adults to infants and even corpses. Today, kidnapping in Nigeria is no longer limited to foreigners; it affects Nigerians across various societal strata, including traditional rulers, chiefs, clergy, teachers, students, and the general populace, with kidnappers showing no respect for highly revered spiritual leaders (Premium Times, December, 2021).

In recent decades, kidnapping has evolved into a national disaster in Nigeria, with significant economic losses due to the decline in crude oil production. This has led to the establishment of numerous Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) aiming to combat kidnapping, such as "Erukaye Hope," a Delta State-based NGO (UNHCR, May 12, 2020). The commercialization of kidnapping gained national attention on February 25, 2006, when youths in the Niger Delta abducted foreign oil workers to demand restitution and increased infrastructural development. Since then, kidnapping has become a widespread and shamelessly commercialized crime across Nigeria, tarnishing the nation's image and posing a significant threat to its citizens (UNHCR, May 12, 2020).

Kidnapping has become a dynamic and distinct crime in Nigeria, needing to be differentiated from terrorism, armed robbery, and other criminal activities (Nigeria Observer News, Jul 7, 2023). The root causes of such nefarious acts in Nigeria include deprivation, corruption, neglect of the masses, lack of robust and sustainable youth empowerment programs, youth exclusion from politics/government, and lack of parental care and guardianship (Thisdaylive, April 25, 2022).

Emergence and Attack of Extremist Groups on Nigeria's Education System

In 2002, shortly after Nigeria's transition to civilian rule, Mohammed Yusuf founded a movement known as Yusufiya or followers of Yusuf in Maiduguri, Borno State, and other regions in North Eastern Nigeria. The movement's primary objective was the complete rejection of Western education in Nigeria, viewing it as incompatible with Islamic principles. The group initially gained the nickname "Nigeria Taliban," but the term "Boko Haram," meaning "Western Education is forbidden" in Hausa, became more widely used as the movement grew (Tar & Safana, 2021). The group's followers included students, school dropouts, unemployed youth, and adults disillusioned by social inequalities and economic hardships, as well as high-ranking elites such as politicians, government officials, and wealthy businessmen.

The group's membership expanded rapidly, attracting young men from across northern Nigeria and neighboring countries with Yusuf's fiery preaching against corrupt secular governments. The government arrested Yusuf on July 3, 2009, and handed him over to the police for prosecution. However, he was killed while in police custody, which further radicalized his followers and escalated the group's attacks (Freeman, 2016).

Boko Haram's deliberate attacks on schools began in 2009, initially involving the destruction and looting of school properties as a means to express their grievances against the government and demand an investigation into Yusuf's death. As the government failed to respond effectively, the group's tactics escalated to include burning and bombing school buildings, as well as kidnapping students and teachers to use as hostages, suicide bombers, and domestic workers (Tar & Safana, 2021). Some of the kidnappers were revealed to be former students of the targeted schools.



Between 2010 and 2020, more than 4,000 students and teachers in northern Nigeria were killed or kidnapped by these extremist groups, with more than 20,000 children unable to attend school due to Boko Haram's activities. Boko Haram specifically targeted girls, kidnapping them as cooks or sex slaves due to their belief that girls should not be educated (Freeman, 2016).

From 2012, Boko Haram's attacks on schools became more deadly and frequent, with schools deliberately targeted and burned. Faced with declining numbers due to security crackdowns, the group began large-scale recruitment of students and other abductees using financial rewards or coercion (Ojo, 2021). Boko Haram increasingly used suicide bombings, arson, shootings, and grenade attacks as part of their tactics.

A United Nations report in 2017 estimated that the conflict between Boko Haram and security forces destroyed 1,500 schools from January 2014 to December 2016, with at least 1,280 teachers and students as casualties. Attacks on schools decreased after 2015, possibly due to the closure or destruction of schools in northeastern Nigeria (Abubakar, et al., 2023).

Between 2013 and 2018, Boko Haram regularly targeted individuals, students, teachers, and other educational personnel in isolated and uncoordinated attacks on schools. Attacks on students and teachers became more frequent from 2013 to 2018 compared to the 2009-2013 period (Freeman, 2016). Boko Haram specifically targeted and killed teachers, lecturers, students, school administrators, and education officials, carrying out mass abductions of students and large-scale bombings that killed and injured hundreds (Freeman, 2016).

In 2015, the Nigeria National Union of Teachers (NUT) reported that over 800 teachers had been killed in Boko Haram conflicts in Northern Nigeria, and a UN report stated that 314 school children had been killed between 2012 and 2014. An Amnesty International report revealed that up to 50 schools were attacked, burned, or destroyed in Borno State in 2013, resulting in the deaths of 70 teachers and hundreds of students (Freeman, 2016). Universities and other tertiary institutions were not spared, with campuses attacked and students, staff, and lecturers kidnapped in horrifying manners (Freeman, 2016).

From March to April 2021, there was a significant increase in attacks on tertiary institutions in northern Nigeria, particularly in states like Kaduna, Niger, Katsina, Zamfara, and Benue. The bandits and terrorists targeted and kidnapped both lecturers and students, often demanding ransom payments (Freeman, 2016). In many instances, the terrorists also burned down school libraries, laboratories, administrative blocks, lecture halls, offices, student hostels, and school furniture, and engaged in rape, assaults, and other harassments (Vanguard, 2022, February 27).

Impact of Banditry and Insecurity on Nigeria's Educational System

The devastating impact of kidnapping and terrorism on Nigeria's educational system is undeniable. These attacks on educational institutions, coupled with the kidnapping of teachers and students, have inflicted lasting damage on society, requiring significant time and resources to address the resulting setbacks and psychological harm caused by terrorists and kidnappers.



One significant consequence of terrorism on educational institutions is the sharp decline in student enrollment. Terrorist groups have deceived school-aged boys into joining them against Western education, recruiting them, while girls have been forced into marriage with Boko Haram members. Some individuals have even torn up or burned their academic certificates, signifying their rejection of Western education. In Yobe State alone, it was reported that over 400,000 children were out of school due to indiscriminate kidnappings and insurgent activities (Odumbo et al., 2017).

Boko Haram has prevented thousands of children in Borno and Yobe states from continuing their education by destroying schools, driving community members away, and specifically targeting female students for mass abductions. Due to the fear of attacks or kidnappings, most schools in the northeast have been closed. For instance, in March 2014, Borno State closed approximately 85 high schools due to Boko Haram attacks. Similarly, some schools in Yobe and Adamawa States were shut down because of insurgency. By 2017, an estimated three million children in northeastern Nigeria were deprived of education, with 57% of all schools in Borno State remaining closed (United Nations Report, 2017).

The security challenges in the country have significantly altered the social lifestyles of education officials and teachers, causing them to self-isolate in their homes and offices (David, 2009). Many teachers have purposely left the exteriors of their homes unfinished to appear impoverished and deter kidnappers. They refrain from wearing good clothes or driving new vehicles to avoid attracting attention, opting instead to use commercial vehicles and motorcycles known as “Okada” for commuting (Odumbo, et al., 2017).

Another devastating effect is the recruitment and radicalization of male students into these extremist groups. The abducted schoolgirls and female teachers have been subjected to sexual slavery, forced marriages, domestic work, and even used as suicide bombers. The high incidence of kidnapping in certain areas has made them high-risk zones for teachers, leading many to relocate to safer areas or abandon teaching altogether. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the teaching workforce and the complete closure of schools in affected areas. Thousands of school buildings in the north have been affected, with some students now having lessons under trees and canopies.

The violence has forced thousands to flee and seek shelter in internally displaced people (IDP) camps or with families outside the northeastern region. According to UNICEF, 952,029 school-age children have been displaced due to the violence, with more than 600,000 losing access to education. Boko Haram's attacks have been particularly devastating for school-age children, especially among the nomadic communities of northern Borno, near Lake Chad and the border with Niger, where educational opportunities were already limited.

The trauma inflicted by Boko Haram has left lifelong scars, negatively affecting students' mental health and leading to depression, anxiety, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This has resulted in decreased productivity among the affected individuals, raising concerns about the impact on both teachers and students.

In a society plagued by terrorism and kidnapping, an atmosphere of fear and distrust prevails, severely limiting productivity and economic activities. This has compelled many affluent



individuals and politicians in Northern Nigeria to send their children abroad for education, leaving the fate of teachers who cannot afford to travel abroad uncertain.

With the growing armed banditry in different parts of Nigeria, especially the northern region, the ramifications of armed banditry are notably detrimental to the educational sector. This is evidenced by a series of attacks directed at schools, students, and educators. Data sourced from the NST database indicates that a minimum of seven bandit attacks were aimed at educational institutions in the north-western states of Katsina, Kaduna, and Zamfara, resulting in the abduction of 519 students and staff between 2019 and 2021 (NST, ND). Nevertheless, these statistics are believed to be incomplete. For instance, in December 2020, over 300 students were abducted by armed bandits from the Government Boys Science Secondary School in Kankara, Katsina State (CBC, December 17, 2020). Subsequent incidents include the abduction of 317 female students from Government Girls Secondary School Jangebe, Zamfara State; 39 students from the Federal College of Forestry Mechanization; and 29 students along with three non-teaching staff from Greenfield University in Kaduna State. As of December 2020, it has been reported that more than 700 individuals have been kidnapped from educational institutions by armed bandits (Dakuku, June 21, 2021). Consequently, schools have been periodically closed due to the menace of armed banditry in seven states, namely Sokoto, Katsina, Kaduna, Niger, and Zamfara (Premium Times, 2021 December).

These incidents bear severe implications for the intergenerational development of human capacity, as armed banditry has led to a decline in school enrollment and an increase in the number of out-of-school children in the northwest region. The north-west region accounts for 3.49 million out-of-school children, the highest in the country. These children are at risk of becoming new recruits for criminal and insurgent groups, perpetuating the cycle of membership and resistance, thereby prolonging the crisis and sustaining insecurity (Blueprint, March 5, 2021).

Available statistics show the catastrophic toll of these attacks. Between July 2010 and February 2022, Human Rights Watch (2012) reported a total death toll of 935 people in 164 attacks. In 2011 alone, 550 people were killed in 135 attacks (Amnesty International, 2012). Additionally, the wanton destruction of school property through bombings has amounted to several billion naira (Shuaibu et al., 2015). These circumstances have dire consequences for sustainable educational development in the affected regions and Nigeria as a whole.

Furthermore, local and international donors, NGOs, international organizations, and foreign investors are hesitant to invest in the educational sector of the affected parts of Northern Nigeria due to the activities of bandits and kidnappers. In regions where bombings are prevalent and properties have been destroyed, economic progress is significantly setback. Economic activities grind to a halt as people are afraid to engage in economic and educational activities due to the fear of attacks. This situation, coupled with the migration of several thousand people to other parts of Nigeria, leads to a rapid deterioration of economic and educational activities. The continuous attacks and vicious onslaughts on individuals and institutions create an unfavorable business environment for both internal and foreign investment, hindering sustainable development.

**Discussion: Implication of Banditry and Insecurity on Nigeria's Educational System**

The research findings reveal a profound impact of banditry and insecurity on Nigeria's educational system. The systematic attacks on educational institutions, combined with the kidnapping of both teachers and students, have had devastating consequences on the educational landscape, socio-economic conditions, and psychological well-being of individuals in the affected regions.

Decline in Student Enrollment and Access to Education

One of the most striking findings is the significant decline in student enrollment in schools due to the fear and consequences of terrorism. The recruitment tactics employed by terrorist groups, particularly Boko Haram, which coerces school-aged boys into joining them against Western education and forces girls into marriages with its members, have disrupted the educational trajectory of many children. As a result, over 400,000 children were reported to be out of school in Yobe State (Odunbo et al., 2017). The closure of approximately 85 high schools in Borno State in 2014 and the subsequent closure of schools in Yobe and Adamawa States due to Boko Haram attacks further emphasize the magnitude of the crisis (United Nations Report, 2017; Abubakar, et al., 2023).

Impact on Teachers and Educational Professionals

The research findings also shed light on the profound changes in the social lifestyle and professional practices of educational officials and teachers due to security challenges. The fear of kidnappings and attacks has forced many to self-imprison in their homes and offices (David, 2009). Teachers have intentionally presented themselves as impoverished to deter kidnappers, refrained from wearing good clothes or driving new vehicles, and used alternative transportation methods like commercial vehicles and motorcycles known as “Okada” (Abubakar, et al., 2023; Soyombo, 2009). Moreover, the high incidence of kidnapping in certain areas has turned them into high-risk zones for teachers, leading to a significant reduction in the teaching workforce and the closure of schools. The brain drain phenomenon, where talented lecturers and teachers abandon their schools for other peaceful states, exacerbates the educational crisis in the affected regions.

Psychological and Emotional Impact on Students

The research findings highlight the severe psychological trauma inflicted on students, especially those abducted by Boko Haram. The trauma has resulted in negative psychological effects, including depression, anxiety, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which significantly diminish the productivity and well-being of the affected individuals (Abubakar, et al., 2023). The long-term impact of this trauma on the educational attainment and overall development of the students is a cause for concern.

Economic and Societal Implications

The pervasive atmosphere of fear, distrust, and limited productivity due to terrorism and kidnappings has broader economic implications. Many affluent individuals and politicians in Northern Nigeria are sending their children abroad for education due to security concerns, leaving the fate of teachers who cannot afford to travel abroad uncertain. This situation, coupled with the reluctance of local and international donors, NGOs, and investors to invest in the educational sector



of the affected parts of Northern Nigeria, hinders sustainable economic and educational development.

The research findings unequivocally demonstrate the devastating impact of banditry and terrorism on Nigeria's educational system, socio-economic conditions, and psychological well-being of individuals in the affected regions. The systematic attacks on educational institutions, the kidnapping of students and teachers, and the resultant decline in student enrollment and access to education have created a significant educational crisis. The profound changes in the social lifestyle and professional practices of educational officials and teachers, the severe psychological trauma inflicted on students, and the broader economic implications highlight the urgent need for comprehensive interventions to address the multifaceted challenges facing the educational sector in the affected regions. The research underscores the importance of prioritizing the restoration of a safe and conducive learning environment, supporting the psychological rehabilitation of affected individuals, and fostering sustainable economic and educational development to rebuild and strengthen Nigeria's educational system.

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive examination of the escalating issues of terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping across Nigeria, highlighting their profound impacts on the country's educational system and broader societal fabric. It offers a detailed analysis of the root causes, including widespread youth unemployment, poverty, corruption, and societal breakdowns, shedding light on the systemic challenges facing Nigeria. The research contributes significantly to the understanding of the complex dynamics of violent crimes in Nigeria and proposes a multi-dimensional approach to address these challenges. It offers targeted recommendations, encompassing moral education, religious and cultural reorientation, inclusive governance, job creation, enhanced security measures, strategic school localization, and strict anti-kidnapping laws, aimed at mitigating the menace of kidnapping and terrorism.

In essence, this study provides valuable insights and actionable recommendations that can guide policymakers, security agencies, and stakeholders in formulating effective strategies to combat the scourge of kidnapping and terrorism, ultimately fostering sustainable peace, security, and development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

To address and potentially eradicate this menace, the study suggests several measures:

Parents and guardians should instill moral values, good conscience, and respect for societal norms and cultural values from a young age to counteract the allure of criminality and materialism among the youth.

Religious leaders across all faiths must actively promote religious tolerance, preach against violence, and emphasize the spiritual and secular implications of engaging in terrorism and criminal acts.

All segments of Nigerian society must be included in governance to foster unity, justice, fairness, and equity, reducing marginalization and promoting democratic values.



Genuine democracy that prioritizes accountability, respect for human rights, and youth empowerment is crucial to address the root causes of violent reactions and insecurity.

Massive job creation efforts should be undertaken by the government, private sector, NGOs, and individuals to channel the energy and intellect of the youth towards positive endeavors.

Strengthening the security apparatus through proactive, well-trained, and well-equipped forces, coupled with improved surveillance and border control, is essential to stay ahead of kidnappers and terrorists.

Schools should be strategically located in areas with high human activity and possibly within towns to minimize vulnerability to attacks.

Strict enforcement and implementation of anti-kidnapping laws, including capital punishment for convicted kidnappers and terrorists, is necessary to deter these crimes effectively.

Implementing these recommendations will be crucial in addressing Nigeria's security challenges, particularly in combating violent crimes like kidnapping and terrorism, and fostering sustainable peace and development in the country.

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