

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON THE CONSEQUENCE OF INSECURITY IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NORTH-CENTRAL, NIGERIA: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate teachers' perception on the consequence of insecurity in Public Senior Secondary Schools in North-Central, Nigeria: A qualitative approach. The study used qualitative approach to elicit necessary information from the respondents. Purposive sampling technique was used to select five teachers from five states (Kwara, Kogi, Niger, Benue, Nasarawa) that comprised North-Central Region. The rationale for using purposive sampling is to help in selecting a sample that is particularly knowledgeable or experienced in the area of interest. The information gathered for this study were analyzed using thematic method which revealed five main themes (kidnapping, ransom payment, incessant killing, arson and fear of attack). The findings of the study revealed that insecurity has affected the academic performance of senior Public Secondary Schools in North-Central, Nigeria. The finding further showed that parents have continuously withdrawn their children from insecurity school to neighboring schools that have peace. The study recommended that there should be synergy among Government, community leaders, private organizations, old students' associations and all the stakeholders in the education industry to provide means of safeguarding schools in North-Central Region.

Introduction

Teaching and learning can only be meaningful in an atmosphere where peace reigns. Therefore, there should be no pandemonium or any threats to human existence or dignity in the teaching and learning environment. The Nigeria schools should be a place where teachers and students would have peace of mind (Ochigbo, et al. 2021). The current wave of school insecurity worries Nigerian educators and administrators greatly since a safe environment is necessary for effective instruction and learning. As a result, security measures at schools foster a safer atmosphere in which people may walk around freely and feel comfortable while engaging in their regular academic activities.

Situations that support the protection of persons and properties are conducive to the success of educational activities. It is thought that better learning outcome would result from a secure learning environment. Unfortunately, it has been observed that from the primary to the tertiary levels of the Nigerian educational system, insecurity has spread like wildfire which has negatively impacted the students' academic performance (Igbuzo, 2011; Fareo & Muktar, 2020; Ochigbo, et al. 2021). Parents, educational organizations, legislators, administrators, and other stakeholders in the educational sector are concerned about these as tranquil environments are necessary for efficient teaching and learning. In view of the high prevalence of crime and violence in schools and the national outcry that trailed the high-profile incidents stakeholders in education are concerned about the safety of children, staff, and school properties.

More so, insecurity as a social illness that is characterized by the presence of a danger to human life as well as school as an organizational. In world today, no effective learning can take place if security measures are not put in place to secure the students and the teachers. Undoubtedly, many instructors and students are involved in confrontations that endanger their safety as well as the security of the school's physical facilities. When a person does not have control over a situation but must depend on the cooperation of others, which cannot be guaranteed, the outcome might be dissatisfaction, especially with the regard to insecurity, which is very frightening. As a result, effective teaching and learning as well as the activities of such schools are jeopardized (Igbuzo, 2011; Akintunde & Selzing-Musa, 2019). Students and teachers in senior public school, North-Central, Nigeria have been confronted with kidnapping, arson, fear of attack and incessant killing which has militate against realization of educational objectives (Nwakpa, 2015; Ojukwu, 2017; Jacob, et al. 2021; Yohana, et al., 2023). Some parents have withdrawn their children from school, teachers have resigned from the job and some schools have been closed down due to insecurity.

Take for instance between December 2020 to April 2022, bandits continuously attacked, killed and abducted over 1000 students and school teachers for ransom in Kaduna, Niger, Abuja and Niger states (Eons Intelligence, 2021). Also, Wadatan Gerba village in Jos about 570 people killed, Amla village in Benue, schools and houses were raised down and Iga and Rutu communities in Nasarawa state 10 people including the teacher were abducted. If the abduction and kidnaping are not stop, the educational system of the region would be affected. If this insecurity continued, the educational system in the region would be at risk. This informs the researcher to investigate the teachers' perception on the consequence of insecurity in public senior secondary schools in North-Central, Nigeria.

Apart from aforementioned mentioned problems, numerous studies have conducted on the consequence of insecurity. Isah and Yakubu (2014) investigated the relationship between insurgency and secondary school safety in northeastern Nigeria. The result revealed that insecurity has consequence on the educational achievement of the students. Temitope, et al. (2020) evaluated the risks posed by the Boko Haram insurgency to the region's educational advancement while outlining potential solutions. The results showed that Boko Haram insurgency has resulted into schools close down. Also, Osasuyi (2019) investigated basic school efficacy and safe school techniques in the northeast of Nigeria. The result revealed that safe schools is the predictor of students' academic performance. Similarly, Donatus and Udebunu (2015) assessed the administration of safety and security in public secondary schools located in the state of Enugu. The finding of the study showed that safety and security in school are determinant of educational attainment. This serve as the gap to be fill in this present study. Based on this discussion, these following research objectives were provided.

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RO1: To investigate kidnapping activities from the teachers' perception on the consequence of insecurity in public senior secondary schools in north-central, Nigeria.

RO2: To examine ransom payment from the teachers' perception on the consequence of insecurity in public senior secondary schools in north-central, Nigeria.

RO3: To verify incessant killing activities from the teachers' perception on the consequence of insecurity in public senior secondary schools in north-central, Nigeria.

RO4: To investigate arson activities from the teachers' perception on the consequence of insecurity in public senior secondary schools in north-central, Nigeria.

RO5: To verify fear of attack from the teachers' perception on the consequence of insecurity in public senior secondary schools in north-central, Nigeria.

Conceptualizing of insecurity

The notion of insecurity is multifaceted and cross-cutting. It has been the focus of intense discussion and is perceived differently by many academics, researchers, and security specialists. As a result, there is no universal agreement on the concept of insecurity because it is frequently seen from several angles. As stated by UNDP (2014) that enduring threats like oppression, illness, and famine serve as illustrations of the ongoing perils that characterize the concept of insecurity. Insecurity is described as a state of unease or apprehension stemming from an actual or perceived absence of safeguarding or inadequate freedom from potential harm (Beland, 2015; Achumba, Ighomeroho & Akpor-Robaro, 2013). From an alternative viewpoint, insecurity represents the condition of susceptibility to hazards, threats, or distress (Achumba, et al. 2013).

Eme and Anyadike (2013) opined that a person is considered secure when they are not in any kind of danger or risk of theft, accident, bodily or moral violence, or degradation. A persistent danger to human life, states, territories, religious convictions, properties, and institutions is perceived as being insecurity. Ubong (2016) expressed that insecurity arises when a person experiences self-doubt or feels exposed to danger, especially for an extended length of time. Sanni (2015) asserted that the feeling of vulnerability, helplessness, lack of safety and danger in the study environment is what determines whether or not females participate in educational programs.

In another development, Adebajoko and Uguwoke (2014) posted that experiencing panic, threat, risk, molestation, bullying, and harassment in any way constitutes a feeling of insecurity. In order to defend the state, it might thus be seen as a danger which frequently led to the arms race and the development of nuclear weapons. It may indicate a lack of security or the presence of risk, danger, uncertainty, distrust, and inadequacy in security, lack of protection, and unsafely (Achumba, et al., 2013). Enactra (2019) noted that insecurity is a mental state distinguished by vulnerability and self-doubt as well as a sense of being unsafe. Beland (2005) stressed that experiencing insecurity is being in a position where one is neither protected nor exposed to danger. Insecurity represents the greatest danger to human life and property in the area, lowering the region's human capital index. The acceleration of the insecurity bedeviling the northern region today is not only an existential threat to the region but also to the nation at large with a very fragile democracy threatened by the worst insecurity of our lifetime.

Consequence of Insecurity on Public Secondary Schools

The aftermath of insecurity in the national school system is numerous. However, Nwachukwu, et al. (2015) enumerated the following:

- a. **Stressful Studies:** As a result of the poor impact on learning caused by security threats, traumatic disorders such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and toxic stress are

common. Children's brains undergo neurobiological alterations when they are under stress (Patterson, 2018). Students' anxieties cause them to work in a tense environment. The dread of being assaulted at any moment affects one's ability to focus on learning which makes students lack self-confidence as well. The ability of students to think, generate new ideas, recall information, and concentrate are all compromised. Students do not perform at their best when they are overcome by fear, worry, and dissatisfaction.

- b. Poor School Attendance:** Parents in Nigerian secondary schools are contemplating taking their children out of school for safety purposes. As a result, a large number of pupils have been unable to attend class (Gustafsson & Smith, 2014; Nwachukwu, et al. 2015). Due to security concerns, students may be unable to attend school for many days and kept at home for a lengthy period and female students are given away for marriage at a young age, depending on the circumstances (Kyari, 2015)
- c. Closure of Schools:** Due to security concerns, several secondary schools have been compelled to close by necessity for many months in disaster-prone locations. In the instance of the insurgency in the state of Borno, schools were closed in key cities (Ameh, 2015).
- d. The Vandalization of School Facilities:** During an uprising or a crisis, facilities in schools like buildings, stationeries, equipment, facilities and relevant materials that enhance effective teaching and learning are destroyed. On some occasions, schools were burnt into ashes which severely hinder the efficacy of the institutions in question.
- e. Production of Half-baked Graduates:** As a result of the insecurity, some institutions are not shut down by the government, and as a consequence, they continue to produce subpar graduates. Teachers in high-risk districts are severely understaffed. As a result, kids get subpar instruction.
- f. Non-Establishment of New Schools:** The child's education is harmed since there are just a few schools from region. Establish new schools, both government and private owners are unable. Owners are afraid to open new schools in crisis-prone regions, so a youngster with a preference for technical education may not be able to attend one of these establishments.

Research Design, Sampling Procedure and Instrumentation

The research design for this study was qualitative research. The population of the study were 200 teachers' working in public senior secondary schools in North-Central region, Nigeria. Five teachers were selected from five states that comprised North-Central region through purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling techniques is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgement when choosing members of the population to participate in their survey (Daramola, 2006; Chua, 2012). The secondary schools with experience of insecurity were used. The five states used in the exercise were Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa and Niger. Structured interview was prepared by the researcher based on kidnapping, ransom payment, incessant killing, arson and fear of attack.

The data then was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews once consent was obtained from the selected teachers. The researcher interviewed respondents based on the

¹Saleman Mashood Warrah, PhD, ²Shehu, Omotosho Sulyman, PhD, ³Ayinde Yusuf Adisa, PhD, ⁴Alao, Monsurat Iyabo, PhD, insecurity level in the public secondary. The audio recordings of the interviews were made. In fact, each interview lasted not more than two hours for each respondent. To protect the respondent identities and maintain privacy, they were given a fictitious name. The interview was structured by the researcher to get relevant information from the selected five respondents. The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Data were then thematically analyzed into coding, groups, main theme and sub-themes so as to have a full glimpse into the clear knowledge and empathy about an individual, a group, a period, an organization or a heritage of certain culture (Lochmiller, 2021). The ethics of interview was duly followed.

Study Main Theme and Sub-Theme

Table 1 showed main theme and sub-theme which include kidnapping, ransom payment, incessant killing, arson and fear of attack.

Table 1: main theme and sub-theme

S/no	Main theme	Sub-theme
1	Kidnapping	Affected schools and teachers' status
2	Ransom Payment	Children eventually leads to out of school
3	Incessant Killing	Hoodlums (petty thieves) are the major problem
4	Arson	No fence
5	Fear of Attack	Truancy and drop-out of school

Main Theme 1: What isteachers' perception on the consequence of insecurity based on kidnapping activities in public senior secondary schools.

Sub-Theme: Affected schools and teachers' status

In relating to qualitative findings, the interview results pointed out that kidnapping was rampant in the North-central zone, Nigeria. The respondents believe that kidnapping is affecting academic performance of public secondary schools. Based on the results of enumerated data, respondent, state that:

"I am a staff with the government science secondary school,. I'm a teacher in this school. The ugly situation that happened to me was on 13th of August, 2022. I was together with my friend of blessed memory. We were together as usual when we returned from our farms around 7:30 am. I told him that I was tired. He responded that we should go and rest. So when he was about to see me off from his house, we met three unknown men, covered their faces and they started pushing us back into the room, asking us to give them our phones and we should lie down. We lay down and they collected all our phones and they started dragging us out of the room. So as they were dragging me, other member of the kidnappers was dragging him too to the other side. When we were going submissively with them I was told to be fast. Because of my shivering, I could not work very well. One of them brought out a cutlass to stab my head. In order to save my head from being matcheted, I used my hand to cover my head; that was how part of my fingers were cut off and blood started gushing out. While I was trying to comply gently with their instruction, we heard a gun shoot.

(Respondent 1, Male, time: 11:am)

Theme 2: What isteachers' perception on the consequence of insecurity based on ransom payment in public senior secondary schools.

Sub-theme: Children eventually withdraw school

Ransom payment is the next thing kidnapper would ask for and not all the victims can pay ransom

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payment. Kidnappers had killed some people due inability to pay. Based on the results of enumerated data, respondent states that:

"I am a widow and my husband was a teacher here and passed away as a result of the inability to cooperate with them by paying the ransom to the bandits that attacked his place of work. My experience had been very difficult since then because I am no longer working since my husband was killed by the unknown men. He was the only one taking the responsibilities of the family. We found it very difficult to maintain and sustain our lives. I today, I was unable to pay my daughter's transport fare to school. She has to trek with the help of her elder brother who is actually out of school as a result of the death of their father. As I speak to you sir, now, I am helpless.

(Respondent 2, Female, time: 12:pm)

Theme 3: What isteachers' perception on the consequence of insecurity based on incessant killing in public senior secondary schools.

Sub-Theme: Hoodlums are the major problem

Incessant killing is a thing that militating against declining in students academic performance. Based on the results of enumerated data, respondent states that:

" I must say the reality, the killings and kidnapping are too much in our community. No particular day you will see people being kill. In fact, I am though of leaving this school"

(Respondent 3, Male, time: 2: pm)

Main Theme 4: What isteachers' perception on the consequence of insecurity based on arson in public senior secondary schools.

Sub-Theme: No fence

"AlhamudullilahiRobilli Alamin! Well, first and foremost, the most challenging issue that is disturbing us here is the issue of the fence. We don't have any fence at all that separates school from the community and that has created a lot of problems for us in this school. It was even rumoured that bandits may be students and community members. These hoodlums (bandits) have been coming in and out of the school freely, to distract, destroy and burn school properties. All these are done to create panic in the minds of the parents and students. However, the parents and members of the community have been coming around to give thanks to our security men that they are up and doing in their discharge of duty. Even yesterday of course, we had a lot of policemen in our midst. They were here because of the hoodlums that infiltrated our school virtually every week, just because we don't have a fence. Supposing the fence is there, all these thing wouldn't have happened. We need government intervention in the areas of erection of fence and proper engagement of more security men in the school. If we have fence and more security men are on ground, in shaa Allah, all these things (arson and the likes) will be a thing of the past.

(Respondent 4, Male, time: 11am).

Main Theme 5: What is teachers' perception on the consequence of insecurity based on fear of attack in public senior secondary schools.

Sub-Theme: Truancy and drop-out of school

"I am one of the senior officers here residing on the campus at the school. I was attacked together with my household in the midnight on the 2nd of November, 2021 by a group of bandits. On that day, we just started hearing gunshots and we didn't know what was happening. We thought it was the local security that was firing guns to scare intruders out of community, since sometimes they do. But it became intense as they were coming close to our side. Eventually, we started seeing people around the house, trying to locate where to enter. They located a soft target, the window in my room. The security has disappeared as these people appeared in full force.

¹Saleman Mashood Warrah, PhD, ²Shehu, Omotosho Sulyman, PhD, ³Ayinde Yusuf Adisa, PhD, ⁴Alao, Monsurat Iyabo, PhD, *Initially I was thinking they were armed robbers trying to break my windows and wanted to gain entry into the house. To my surprise, they eventually entered through the window. They broke and destroyed the burglary proof and entered. They came on us asked where the money is. I said no money. Well, if money is the problem, the little money we had at that time in the house, my wife, children and I gathered all we had together to save our lives, Yes, we gave it to them, I think about fifty thousand naira, hoping that that would be enough for them. When they were through with that, they all went out, just then, I thought I should go out. Before I know it, somebody from behind landed something on my head and started pulling me out to an unknown destination. At present, I am passing through a post-traumatic disorder each time I remember this ugly situation. It will occur to me as if they are coming again for the attack* (Respondent 5, Male, Time: 1pm).

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study confirmed that there were security challenges in public senior secondary schools in North-central zone, Nigeria. Based on the victims' experience. The findings corroborated with the study conducted by Okpanachi (2023) that security as an essential concept is commonly associated with the alleviation of threats to cherish values, survival of individuals, groups or properties. In the same vein, Cowan, et al. (2013) opined that security is the precaution taken to safeguard school from impending danger or injury. In line with the study investigated by Balami, et al. (2016) security is a very vital instrument for efficient teaching and learning to take place. The Albert and Tsanwani (2017) maintained it would be feasible to improve students' achievement in schools through fostering a more supportive environment in schools, if schools were encouraged to see safety and security issues in their broader contexts. Jacob, et al. (2022) opined that information and communication technology can be used to monitor, detect and track bandits and insurgents in the country.

The study conducted by Okpanachi (2023) that secured environment has been the necessary ingredient for human existence and development and that protecting schools is a step toward goal achievement. He further stressed that no society can achieve any meaningful learning goal without good necessary security. Nwagbosa (2012) asserted that in human history, the central focus of security has been the people. Security as an essential concept is commonly associated with the alleviation of threats to cherished values, survival of individuals, groups or properties (Okpanachi, 2023). This finding corroborates the submission Ekechukwu and Osaat (2020) that many people engaged in kidnapping business for ransom but on different purposes and missions. Kidnapping can be grouped according to motives into: political kidnapping, kidnapping for marriage, ritual kidnapping and monetary kidnappers target students of rich families and sometimes demand colossal amounts of money as ransom. The finding of this study was in line with the study investigated by Dantala (2014) that one of the greatest challenges facing the education industry in Nigeria is kidnapping for money which is part of the insecurity issues in the country. The consequences of kidnapping on the Nigerian educational system can be seen in its lack of growth and development.

A study investigated by Ekechukwu and Osaat (2020) which revealed that educational institutions are the major target of the kidnappers. Kidnappers see lecturers, students, principals as wealthy men and women in the society. Some paid through their noses as huge ransoms were demanded for their freedom. In most cases, some lost their lives. Adofu and Alpaslan (2018) asserted that kidnapping and other insecurity matters sooner or later will reduce the manpower needed for the growth and development of the nation. The greatest among them is the kidnap of the Chibok girls during President Goodluck Jonathan's regime. The Nigeria government paid huge ransom to kidnappers but all efforts are fruitless. The result of this study was supported by the study investigated by Ramani and Zhimin (2010) that violence, riot and arson attack have

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affected the actualization of school aims and objectives. In another development, Gitonga (2020) supported this result that terrorist attacks, gun crime, vandalism, arson among others are the problems facing most of schools in both developing and developed countries in the world. These negate the goal achievement of public secondary schools in North-central. It is imperative for government of Nigeria to look for a lasting solution to arson that occur secondary schools in North-central Nigeria. This is a call for proper security measures to be put in place.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that teachers who had experience of kidnapping activities confirmed that insecurity affected schools in North-Central, Nigeria. Insecurity such as kidnapping, arson, fear of attack and ransom payment had destabilized the schools' activities and parents have enroll the children into neighboring state where there is peace and harmony. Students and teachers are the main target of kidnappers and they believe that government would be responsible for ransom payment. It is believe of this study that if insecurity in the region can be reduce, educational goas in the region would be attainable.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations were provided:

1. Government should ensure that, kidnapping activities are stop by improving security architecture of the schools in the region.
2. Government should review the policy of providing ransom payment to bandits in the region with frequent security inspection to school.
3. Schools should be located close the community watch so as to avert the incursion of incessant killing of students and teachers.
4. Government should employ competentand well-trained school security guards in all schools to avert arson activities
5. Government should endeavour to install CCTV camera in the school so as to monitor kidnapping activities which in turn reduce fear of attack.

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Conflict of Interest

The author of this study declared that there is no conflict of interest in this current article.

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