

**INFLUENCE OF ARMED BANDITRY AND KIDNAPPING ON PRIMARY SCHOOLS
CHILDREN IN KADUNA STATE: IMPLICATION FOR SCHOOL COUNSELLING**

BY

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Abstract

The paper focused on the influence of armed banditry and kidnapping on primary schools children in Kaduna state: Implication for School Counselling. Descriptive research design was employed for the study. The population comprised of all the primary school teachers in Birni Gwari Local Government area of Kaduna state. The sample was made up of 180 teachers from some selected primary schools in the local government. Simple random sampling was employed in the selection of the sample. The instrument used for data collection was a self designed questionnaire titled "Perceived Influence of Armed Banditry and Kidnapping Questionnaire" (PIABAKQ). The instrument was validated by an expert in Guidance and Counselling and an expert in Primary Education both from the Federal College of Education, Zaria. The instrument was pilot tested using test-re-test method. The data obtained were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) which yielded coefficient of 0.78 to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. Frequency count and percentages were used to answer the two research questions. The findings of the study revealed the ten (10) most perceived influences of armed banditry and kidnapping on primary school pupils in Kaduna state where pupils regarded schools as unsafe place, they are being traumatized due to the kidnap/killing of family member or friend by the bandits, fear of unknown is rampant, pupils no longer interested in school work among others. The paper recommended that all stakeholders in education must effectively and creatively come together to help in reversing the current state of insecurity in schools in order to avoid a catastrophic collapse of educational sector.

Keywords: Teachers' perception, Armed banditry, Kidnapping and Counselling

Introduction

As we all know, the importance of education to the lives of human being and his development cannot be too stressed. In other words, education is essential and even central in the achievement of any developmental goal. So, from childhood, children are sent to school to acquire education in terms of values, skills and knowledge. The knowledge, skills and values so acquired will help in the elimination of illiteracy thereby sharpen their intellect. This was a reason why Universal Basic Education (UBE) was launched in 1999 to give every child the opportunity of going to school (Okey and Ndum, 2012) and this makes primary education to be free and compulsory. The above notwithstanding, there are various setbacks to the attainment of goals and objectives of the UBE in Nigeria. These ranges from lack of political will by the government, unequal access to educational facilities, child labour, armed banditry and kidnapping of school children etc. This was why Adedeji and Marco (2021) described Nigerian educational system as being deep into crises on multiple fronts. To the duo, the recent spate of mass kidnapping of school children arguably represents the gravest existential threat and crisis to the educational system. Nigeria in recent times has been battling with incessant cases of armed banditry and kidnapping of people especially in Kaduna state. This no doubt has affected socioeconomic activities in the state, the educational sector inclusive. The impact is felt by everyone within the state. There were isolated cases targeted against school children and their teachers thereby making a good number of schools to be closed and as a result a number of schools were inaccessible for some times thereby rendering many pupils out of school. In a statement by an official of Kaduna state government as reported by Africa Live News, a total of 323 people were killed by bandits in Kaduna state between January and March 2021 while 949 people were kidnapped during the period. Out of the number, Kaduna Central Senatorial district accounted for 236 deaths within Birni Gwari, Chikun, Igabi and Kajuru local government areas.

Of concern is the fact that Kaduna state is part of the Northern Nigeria which is already the most educationally disadvantaged region. According to an official of UNICEF, Ms Pernille who said 69% of Nigeria's out of school children is located in the northern part of the country. According to Asuquo,

(2009), the term "kidnapping" is complex and transitional due to its state-to-state scenario as well as jurisdictional criteria. Ugwuoke, (2011) and Walsh & Poole (2019) described the phenomenon as 'abducting or capturing away of a person intentionally to deprive them of personal freedom. Generally, kidnapping comprises capturing and detaining an individual against his or her will, usually in an extension of other criminal intentions. Abraham (2010) has further illustrated that kidnapping is of two kinds: simple and aggravated. The latter is rampant in Nigeria and is more unsafe because it contains both physical and psychological suffering and deprivations, it really might be difficult for most Nigerians to utter which of aggravated kidnapping and armed robbery is the most dreaded and feared crime in the country.

On the influence of kidnapping, Clark (2004) opined that the most common psychological consequences in victims of crimes like kidnapping involve permanent modification of personality traits (such as emotional dependence, suspiciousness or hostility) that persists at least two years and lead to a deterioration of interpersonal relationships and performance. Another effect of kidnapping according to Petersen (2008) is that the victims' family is crippled by fear of uncertainty about the welfare of their loved ones, who the kidnappers are, why they abducted their loved ones and if the matter can, or will be safely resolved. Children have suffered untold plights due to the dehumanizing growth of kidnapping in Nigeria. Not only does forcefully removal of a child from his/her family traumatizes the victim; it also unravels the lives of his/her parents, family and community (Orset, 2008). Soyombo (2016) claims that kidnapping barricades so many people's social relations and social life by keeping them indoors day and night. It resulted in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder due to horrifying incidences of the menace, no inter-personal relationship because kidnapping installs a high level of mistrust among the people of Nigeria. Freeman (2020) observed that one common effect of the abduction which seemed memorably traumatic for those concerned, and which was raised many times was the lack of contacts of many parents with their children during the period that they were away. This was often because the "left behind parents" did not know the children whereabouts. As observed by Echeburua, Corral and Armor (2003) kidnapping for a ransom is a violent crime, a negative event that usually happen suddenly, generating fear and helplessness, threaten people physical or psychological well-being and leave victims in an emotional state which they are unable to deal with using their normal psychological resources. Any kind violent crime is a trauma for the victim involves a collapse of the person's feelings of insecurity, also affecting indirectly their immediate family circle. Apart from the suffering of the direct victim the entire family structure is affected.

It is on this premise that this study intends to investigate into the effect of armed banditry and kidnapping among primary school pupils in Birni Gwari local government area of Kaduna state as perceived by the teachers.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. What are the ten (10) most perceived influences of armed banditry and kidnapping in Birni Gwari local government primary schools?
- ii. To what extent are primary school pupils in Birni Gwari local government affected by armed banditry and kidnapping?

Methodology

The design employed for the study is descriptive survey. The sample was made up of 180 teachers from some selected primary schools in Birni Gwari local government area of Kaduna state. Simple random sampling was employed in the selection of the sample. The instrument used for data collection was a self designed questionnaire titled "Perceived Influence of Armed Banditry and Kidnapping Questionnaire" (PIABAKQ). The questionnaire was divided into three sections of A, B and C. Section A sought for the background information of the respondents, section B itemized twenty (20) items designed to collect information on the influence of armed banditry and kidnapping on the primary school pupils in the local government. The respondents were required to indicate either Agree or Disagree to each of the item statement. The section C contained information on the extent to which armed banditry and kidnapping have negatively affected the schools. For this section, respondents were made to tick any of the following: (i) Not affected (ii) Affected (iii) Highly affected (iv) Extremely affected, as their responses.

The instrument was validated by an expert from Guidance and Counselling and one from Primary Education Departments of Federal College of Education, Zaria. The instrument was pilot tested in some primary schools different from the target population using test retest method. The results of the two administrations were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis which yielded 0.78 as coefficient. Frequency count and percentages were used to answer the two research questions.

Results

The results of the study were presented below:

Research Question 1: what are the ten (10) most perceived influences of armed banditry and kidnapping on primary school pupils in Birni Gwari local government of Kaduna state?

Table 1: Showing the responses on the ten (10) most perceived influence of armed banditry and kidnapping on primary school pupils in Birni Gwari local government of Kaduna state

S/N	Item Statement	No Agreed	of %	No Disagreed	of %
1.	Pupils regarded schools as unsafe place	166	92.2	16	7.8
2.	Many pupils are traumatized due to the kidnap/killing of family member or friend by the bandits	142	78.9	38	21.1
3.	Fear of unknown is rampant among the pupils	139	77.2	41	22.8
4.	Pupils are no longer interested in school work	138	76.7	42	23.3
5.	School pupils feel unsecured at all times	128	71.1	52	28.9
6.	Aggressive behaviour is now common among the pupils	125	69.4	55	30.6
7.	Social interaction among pupils is greatly reduced	117	65	63	35
8.	Insecurity has brought lack of concentration in school work	116	64.4	64	35.6
9.	There is more collaboration between the school and the community.	113	62.8	67	37.2
10.	Schools are being secured more than ever before.	109	60.6	71	39.4

The result in table 1 above showed the ten (10) most perceived influences of armed banditry and kidnapping on primary school pupils in Birni Gwari local government of Kaduna state. The influence is as follows: pupils regarded schools as unsafe place (92.2%), pupils are being traumatized due to the kidnap/killing of family member or friend by the bandits (78.9%), fear of unknown is rampant among the pupils (77.2%), pupils no longer interested in school work (76.7%), school pupils do feel unsecured at all times (71.1%), aggressive behaviour is now common among the pupils (69.4%), social interaction among pupils is greatly reduced (65%), insecurity has brought lack of concentration in school work (64.4%), there is more collaboration between the school and the community(62.8%) and schools are being secured more than ever before (60.6 %).

Research Question 2: To what extent are primary school pupils in Birni Gwari local government affected by the banditry and kidnapping?

Table 2: Showing the extent of the effect of armed banditry and kidnapping on the primary school pupils in Birni Gwari local government

S/N	Perceived Effect	No of Responses	%
1.	Not affected	16	8.9
2.	Affected	30	16.7
3.	Highly affected	94	52.2
4.	Extremely affected	40	22.2
	Total	180	100

Table 2 above indicated that the number of responses for the perceived effect of “Not affected” was 16 (8.9%), that of “Affected” was 30 (16.7%), “Highly affected” has 94 (52.2%) while “Extremely affected” got 40 (22.2%). On the whole, it could be observed that 164 (91.1) of the respondents found themselves among “Affected” to “Extremely affected”. This in essence means that primary school pupils were highly affected as a result of armed banditry and kidnapping activities in Birni Gwari local government area of Kaduna state.

Discussion

The study revealed the ten (10) most perceived influences of armed banditry and kidnapping on primary school pupils in Birni Gwari local government of Kaduna state where pupils regarded schools as unsafe place, pupils are being traumatized due to the kidnap/killing of family member or friend by the bandits, fear of unknown is rampant among the pupils, pupils no longer interested in school work and that school pupils do feel unsecured at all times. Others include the fact that aggressive behaviour is now common among the pupils, social interaction among pupils is greatly reduced and that insecurity has brought lack of concentration in school work. All these factors no doubt affect the psychological and physiological make up of any student not to talk of these young ones in primary schools.

Concentration and willingness to learn will be affected which will in turn affect Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education For All (EFA) which are targeted at securing primary education for all. This is in line with the opinion of Adamu, Maduagwu and Crispina (2014) when they opined that persistent armed conflicts will continue to hinder total access to education. In the same view, Adedeji and Marco (2021) observed that with the spate of recent school kidnappings, community and parental trust in the education system could shrink significantly, and the problem of access to quality and equitable education could become severely amplified. However, the study revealed the positive influence of armed banditry and kidnapping on primary school pupils in Birni Gwari local government of Kaduna state. This is shown in the fact that there is more collaboration between the school and the community and that schools are being secured now more than ever before.

The study equally revealed that although few pupils are not affected by the activities of bandits and kidnappers but majority were affected. This calls for concern to every stakeholder in education because if the trend is not curtailed on time, the future of the country is in jeopardy not only in education but also in other sectors of the economy.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, this study concluded that armed banditry and kidnapping on primary school pupils in Birni Gwari local government of Kaduna state has made pupils regarded schools as unsafe place, pupils are under trauma, fear of unknown is rampant among the pupils, pupils no longer interested in school work, pupils do feel unsecured at all times, aggressive behaviour is common among the pupils, social interaction among pupils has reduced drastically and insecurity has brought lack of concentration in school work. It can be concluded also that armed banditry and kidnapping has greatly impacted on primary school pupils in Birni Gwari local government of Kaduna state.

Counselling Implications

The findings of the study pointed to the fact that banditry and kidnapping activities are inimical to successful academic progress of pupils, Counselling therefore is an important psychological tool to manage the influence of armed banditry and kidnapping for sustainable and positive environment for learning. School counsellors are resource managers at hand not only to the pupils but also to the teachers and parents in dealing with the effects of the banditry and kidnapping activities. Counsellors in schools and the community need to employ various skills and techniques both proactive and remedial to ensure schools' climate are reduced of various tensions and stress associated with the armed banditry and kidnapping. In order to help students recover from traumatic experiences, Guidance Counsellors experienced in assisting trauma victims are inevitable.

Recommendations

In the light of the foregoing, the study recommends the following:

- i. Nigerian government, policy makers, school leaders, parents, guidance counsellors and the community at large must effectively and creatively come together to help in reversing the current state of insecurity in schools in order to avoid a catastrophic collapse of educational sector.
- ii. School counsellors and psychologists need to be recruited in schools and empowered to work assiduously to reduce the effect of banditry and kidnapping on the pupils in primary schools.

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