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## **EFFECT OF BOKO HARAM ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT.** *The study is aimed at assessing the effect of Boko Haram on school attendance in Northern Nigeria. Three hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. A questionnaire containing 20 items was designed by the researcher. This was validated by experts and tested for reliability using the test – re – test method and data analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistics. The instrument was administered to 126 schools randomly selected from schools in states with high rate of Boko Haram insurgency – Yobe, Bauchi and Borno states. The data collected was analysed using the t-test and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics. It was revealed from the results that there is no significant difference in school attendance among male and female pupils / students. There is a significant difference in school attendance among rural and urban schools. There is also a significant difference in school attendance among primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in areas prone to Boko Haram attacks. Based on the findings, recommendations were made which include improved federal government commitment to beef-up security in schools in Northern Nigeria and a special orientation to sensitize the people on security matters in schools.*

**KEYWORDS:** Boko Haram, Insurgency, Militancy, School Attendance.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The nation Nigeria has witnessed brutal confrontation and massive assault from terrorist group which is undoubtedly the most blood-thirsty and destructive, both in term of demonic brutality, mindless savagery and flagrant disobedience to the principles of peace and stability. Nigeria has witnessed insurgency from this terrorist group called Boko Haram from 2009. They unleash terror and fear in the minds of every Nigeria. There is wanton destruction of government properties, bombing of churches, Mosques and other public places, assassination of prominent individuals, burning of schools occasioned by sporadic shooting of innocent citizens.

However, before 2009, Nigeria also witnessed several forms of terrorism which is a deliberate and systematic use of violence to destroy, kill, maim, and intimidate the innocent in order to achieve a goal or draw national or international attention to demands which ordinarily may be impossible or difficult to achieve under normal political negotiation or on the battlefield against a government army.

Obioma (2012) noted that some of these terrorist attacks are politically motivated even though some may have other ancillary motives such as religious, economic or social. Before the declaration of amnesty for Niger Delta youths by President Yaradua in 2005, the Niger Delta region had terrorist groups such as Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta People Volunteer Force, the Egbesu Boys, and Niger Delta Vigilante with a long history dating to the Adaka Boro Movement in the 1960's. (Ayangese, 2010) and through to Ken Saro Wiwa's struggles. These militant groups launched agitation against environmental degradation, unemployment, poverty, deprivation and marginalization in the Niger Delta areas of Nigeria. In the East, the Bakassi Boys and the Bakassi Movement for the Actualizations of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) are also terrorist groups fighting for equal rights and security of N'digbo true federalism, autonomy and political relevance of the Igbo people in Nigeria having been ravaged by the civil war and abandoned thereafter. The Odual People's congress (OPC) is the militating wing and mouth-piece of the Egbe-Omo-Oduduwa for the Yorubas in the Western Region of Nigeria. It was used by dominant political parties in the West to advance their courses and achieve sanity. The Arewa People's congress in the Northern Region was also a formidable group. Several pockets of minor militant groups also arose in places like the Jos Plateau area, Igala, Idoma, Zaki, Ihiam etc There interest was mainly on land acquisition, boundary adjustment and grazing rights.

Abiye (2011) noted that domestic terrorism arose in Nigeria because emergent militant groups took advantage of government's inefficient action and inactions in dealing with the fundamental elements of nationhood. Such as internal security, resource control, injustice, corruption, ethnicism, sycophancy, favouritism, over lordship, and marginalization. These factors have made terrorism to be ethnicized in Nigerian. Currently the nation is witnessing high spate of insecurity especially in the northern Nigeria by a group of terrorists known as Boko Haram. The Jama'atu Ahlus-Summah lid-da wal Jihad popularly known as Boko Haram is a strong pseudo-Islamist terrorist group which has its base in Kanamma, Northern-eastern Nigeria. Musa, (2011) stated that the Boko haram has been in existence since 2001 but did not become popular until 2009 when they participated actively in the sectarian violence which occurred in the Northern Nigeria. The name Boko Haram is a Hausa statement, which upon translated into English mean "Western education is sinful" . this group is opposed to everything that is of Western origin, more especially Western education; its ideologies and systems. Etymologically "Boko in Hausa language means Animist, western or otherwise non Islamic education, and the Arabic meaning of Haram figuratively means 'sin'. Boko Haram opposes not only western education but western culture and modern science as well. Yusuf (2009) stated that the belief that the world is a sphere is contrary to Islam and should be rejected along with Darwisim and the theory that rain comes from water evaporated the sun.

This group was founded in 2002 in Maiduguri by Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf. In 2004, it moved to Kanamma, Yobe State where it set up a base called "Afganistan". This base was used to attack nearby police outposts, killing police officers, burning Churches and schools with a vow that the war will continue as long as the political and educational system was not changed. The Boko haramists prefer the Sharia Law applied all over the country and this will be difficult for the government to comply. They vowed that they would rather have a separate Islamic state carved out of Nigeria where they can practice their religion unhindered. The Federal Government of Nigeria saw these demands as treasonable, unreasonable and unaccepted and in an attempt to purge the group of its excesses, Mohammed Yusuf the leader was killed in 2009. Adamu (2009) stated that from that year and following the assumption of a new leadership headed by Abubakar

Shekau, Boko Haram reinvented violence and began what can best be described as the bombardment of northern Nigeria, with such frequency and intensity that are quite unprecedented in the history of violence in Nigeria Ajayi (2011) enumerated the following activities of the Boko Harams in Nigeria:

- In January, 2010 the group struck in Borno State killing four people in Dala Alem den wa id in Maiduguri metropolis.
- On September 7 2010, Boko haram freed over 700 inmates from a prison in Bauchi state.
- In December, 2010 Boko haram were blamed for a market bombing, following 92 of its members arrested by police.
- On Friday January, 28 2011, a gubernatorial candidate was assassinated along with his brother and four police officers.
- On March 29, police thwarted a plot to bomb an ANPP election Rally in Maiduguri, Borno State.
- On April 1 2011 suspected Boko Haram attacked a police station in Bauchi.
- On April 15, 2011, the Independent National electoral commission was bombed in Maiduguri
- April 22, 2011, Boko Haram freed 14 prisoners in Yola
- May 29, 2011, multiple bombing in Northern Nigeria.
- June 26, 2011, Bombing of a beer parlour in Maiduguri, 25 people died.
- June 16, 2011 Bombing of the Police Force Headquarter in Abuja.
- August 12, 2011, killing of prominent Muslim cleric Liman Borno.
- August, 26 2011 – Bombing of the United Nations (UN) House in Abuja 23 died
- November, 2011 – Attack on the convoy of Borno Governor, Kashim Shettima on his return trip abroad.
- November, 2011 – coordinated bombing and shooting attacks on police facilities in Potiskum and Damaturu in Yobe state, 150 died.
- December 25, 2011 – Multiple bomb attacks. Killed dozens including 35 worshippers at St. Theresa Catholic Church Madala.
- January 5 & 6, 2012 Multiple bombings in Kano.
- January 20, 2012 – The Kano bombing
- February 8, 2012 – Suicide bombing at the army headquarters in Kaduna
- February 16, 2012 – Prison break in central Nigeria, 130 prisoners released.
- April 26, 2012 – 15 Church goers killed in Bauchi
- June 17 2012 – Suicide bombing attacks on three Churches in Kaduna 100 worshippers died.
- The list of the various attacks by this sect – Boko Haram in 2013 is endless. They have unleashed fear and terror in the minds of the people staying in these parts of the country thereby affecting every aspects of their social and economic life. Such insecurity have led to massive migration from such troubled areas to other parts of the country which is believed to be less vulnerable to Boko Haram attack.

What today can be considered as a security monster could be traced to the teachings of Maitasine, Mohammed Marwa, a Muslim fundamentalist who rejected the influence of the education system imposed by the British when they conquered the Sokoto caliphate in 1903. (Shettu 2000). Like the members of the Jamaitu Ablis sunnal Lidda wati wal-Jihad, which is the original name of Boko Haram meaning “people committed to the propagation of the prophet’s teachings and Jihad” they strictly believed in the koranic phrase Surah 4;11 “Anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors. Hence members of these sects believed that it is ‘Haram’ or ‘sinful’ to embrace western education as it is not revealed by the prophet.

Education is worst hit by the Boko Haram activities. Apart from the fact that the fight is directly against western education which is widely practiced in Nigeria with schools established in every nook and cranny of the country, western education has remained the bedrock of human and capital developments in Nigeria.

Despite the imbalance in education in the northern and southern Nigeria; while the North embraced Islamic education, the south practiced western education. After the amalgamation of the Northern and southern protectorates in 1914, western education became a unifying force for the two regions. So, the northern Nigeria were to some extent disadvantaged as they embraced western education late. The Almajiri education system which started in Northern Nigeria around the eleventh century A.D (Ajayi 2001) involve sending male children to far away places to acquire Islamic education at a tender age of four to nine years. Its success in the past was because the host community took responsibility for the children's welfare. Today the Almajiri's are left at the mercy of their teachers or instructors who convert them into street beggars. Yakubu (2012) disclosed that in April, 2012 that there were over 9.5 million Almajiri children that are denied the right to basic primary education in Nigeria.

Northern Nigeria has suffered low enrolment rate especially at the primary education sector. Ruquyyatu (2013) blamed this on the effect of long standing effect of Islamic education as most parents are yet to embrace western education. To such parents, western education is tied to the bible and it is an indirect way of changing their religion. Secondly, the security situation in the Northern Nigeria also comes to play. The constant threat posed by Boko Haram which started in 2009 and other extremists religious sect like the Jama'atu Anbarul Mmuslimna FinBadilas Sudan, undermines efforts at improving education in the region. These groups have carried out several attacks and issued threats to schools in the North in some of these attacks, teachers were killed or injured and structure razed. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of March, 2012, gunmen linked to Boko Haram attacked Hausawa – Danmaliki primary school in kumboso local government area of Kano state. Several pupils and teachers were killed. In September, 2013, a school of Agriculture in Yobe state was also attacked at night by the Boko Haram and more than sixty students were killed (vanguard, 2013). These are among the several attacks on schools by the Boko Harams.

Nigeria, DHS Education Data survey (2011). showed a gloomy picture of education particularly in the North west and North East parts of the Nigeria. According to the report, 12 percent of children in Borno state are not in primary school while in Zamfara state, the percentage of out – of – school children is 68 percent. The two states have the highest numbers of out – of school children.

The report also revealed that the rate of children who have never been to school is also alarming. The report reveals that 72 percent of children in Borno state have never been to school, with 4 percent in the federal capital Territory. Out of ever 120 children, the report revealed that Zamfara have an average of 28 children in school. Borno state have 29 children in school out of every 120 children, Sokoto 34, Yobe 42, while Plateau State has the highest number of children in school with 113 of every 120.

## Education Survey in Nigeria

### School Attendance across the States

Highest Number In School	Lowest Number In School
Ondo State 119 out of every 120	Zamfara State 28 out of every 120
Anambra State 117 out of every 120	Borno State 29 out of every 120
Cross River State 114 out of every 120	Kebbi State 34 out of every 120
Delta State 113 out of every 120	Sokoto State 42 out of every 120
Abia State 113 out of every 120	Yobe State 42 out of every 120
Plateau State 113 out of every 120	

Source: Federal Ministry of Statistics (2011) The Nation (2011).

The areas with the lowest number of children in school are in the Northern region of Nigeria as they are worst hit by the Boko Haram attack. The level of education could also be regarded as the basis for such groups to emerge. Testing parental understanding of education, the survey shows that 80% of parents in Zamfara State cannot read and write in English Language. Niger State 63 percents, Yobe 78 percent and Adamawa with 47 percent of parents that cannot read or write in English. (The Nation, 2011). This may account for why such states became breeding grounds for Boko Harams.

Boko Haram has dealt a fatal blow on the enrolment of pupils and students to schools in the Northern Nigeria. Parents and pupils live in perpetual fear of attacks and this may have direct effect on school attendance.

### Statement of Problem.

Attendance to school is dependent on the readiness of the child, encouragement from parents, provision of school materials, distance to school and above all the security of the child. Boko Haram has become a threat to most parents and pupils in most Northern States. There are series of cases of bombing and burning of schools and houses in Northern Nigeria. What then is the effect of this on school attendance among pupils/students in such areas?

### Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to find out if the activities of the Boko Haram have a direct effect on the attendance of pupils and students to schools especially in those vulnerable states in Nigeria.

### Hypothesis

- The study is guided by this research hypothesis.

Ho<sub>1</sub> – There is no significant difference in school attendance among male and female pupils/students in areas prone to Boko Haram attacks in Northern Nigeria.

Ho<sub>2</sub> - There is no significant difference in school attendance among urban and rural schools in states that are prone to Boko Haram attacks in Northern Nigeria

Ho<sub>3</sub> - There is no significant difference in school attendance among primary, secondary and tertiary schools in areas that are prone to Boko Haram attacks in Northern Nigeria.

### METHODS

The study is a descriptive survey. It is intended to asses the effect of Boko Haram on school attendance in the Northern Nigeria. The study cover schools in the most vulnerable states in Northern Nigeria: Yobe, Bauchi and Borno states were selected for the study. 2 tertiary institutions were selected from each state and 30 urban primary and secondary schools were randomly selected from each of the 3 states as well as 30 rural primary and secondary schools.

A questionnaire containing 20 items on the effect of Boko Haram on school attendance (EBHSA) was designed for the study. The instrument was validated by 3 experts in test and evaluation as well as school administration in Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The instrument was further subjected to a reliability test using the test – re-test method. 20 respondents who were not originally included in the sample size were used. The data obtained was analysed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and it was established at 0.86 which shows that the instrument is reliable.

The instrument was administered to 126 schools heads and was collected on the spot hence the 100% rate of return. The data collected was analysed using the T-test statistical analysis and Analysis of Variance.

## RESULTS

Ho<sub>1</sub> - There is no significant difference in school attendance among male and female pupils/students in areas prone to Boko Haram attacks in Northern Nigeria.

- This hypothesis was tested using items 1-5 in the questionnaire.

**Table 1: t–Test analysis of school attendance among male and female/pupils/students.**

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	S	df	t-cal	t-cal	Remark
Male Students	5,481	87.3	42.1		0.93		
				10960		1.96	Not significant
Female Students	5,481	78.2					

The table shows that there is no significant difference in the attendance rate of male and female pupils students in areas that are prone to Boko Haram insurgency in Northern Nigeria. The calculated t-value of 0.93 is less than the critical t. value of 1.96

Ho<sub>2</sub> - There is no significant difference in school attendance among urban and rural schools in states with high rate of Boko Haram insurgency.

Items 6 – 11 in the questionnaire tested the hypothesis.

**Table 2: t – test analysis school attendance in urban and rural schools.**

variable	N		S	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Remark
Urban schools	63	10.3	9.2				
				124	9.32	1.956	significant
Rural schools	63	8.2	6.3				

The table shows there is a significant difference in attendance among urban and rural schools. The calculated t value of 9.32 is greater than the critical t value of 1.96.

Ho<sub>3</sub> - There is no significant different in school attendance among primary, secondary and tertiary schools in areas that are prone to Boko Haram attacks in Northern Nigeria.

- This hypothesis was tested with items 12 – 20 in the questionnaire.

**Table 3: ANOVA table on school attendance among primary, secondary and tertiary schools students.**

Source of variance	Df	Sum of square	Mean Square	F-cal	F-crit
Between groups	123	178	90		
Within groups	123	1702	3.8	24.6	19.5
Total		2880			

The table indicates that there is a significant difference in attendance among primary, secondary and tertiary schools in areas that are prone to Boko Haram attacks. The F. Calculated of 24.6 is greater than the F-critical of 19.5.

## DISCUSSIONS

School attendance is essential for the academic growth of any child. When there are security crisis, it may affect the rate of attendance in school. There is no significant difference in school attendance among male and female pupils/student once there is a security crisis. Akintoye (2010) noted that irrespective of age, sex and nationality, once there is an attacks by the Boko Haram, the survivors often dread staying in such places and may hesitate sending their children to school especially when they are not too sure of the security measure that have been put in place.

Boko haram attack is not restricted to the urban or rural areas. Their attacks cut across boundaries. However, Ajayi (2011) stated that good security measures are always put in place in the urban centres as it house all government parastatals and structures. As soon as there is an attack in the urban centres, the Joint Task Force (JTF) a special military force is often mobilized to ensure adequate security. This to a reasonable extent amount for why there is a significant difference in the urban and rural school attendance.

The primary, secondary and tertiary schools may also vary in their rate of school attendance as revealed in the result. The primary school child is often guided and directed by the parents. When there is a security problem, parents will definitely protect their children by keeping them indoors, if possible; out of school for that period until adequate security measures are put in place by the government. The secondary school child in the other hand has some little freedom to decide whether to go to school or not, some may risk by going to school at the heat of such attack while some may stay away for a very long time. The tertiary school students are guided by a uniform academic calendar such that the period of the National Youth Service Corps is uniform for all tertiary institutions in Nigeria, so in-respective of the security situation, students risk to go to school although the federal government often beef – up security in campuses so that academic calendar is not disrupted.

## FINDINGS

The study reveals that

- School attendance is affected in areas prone to Boko Haram attacks in Northern Nigeria.
- There is no significant difference in school attendance among male and female students in areas vulnerable to Boko Haram attacks.
- The urban schools are often protected during such insurgency by government security forces.
- The rural schools are often neglected and the children live in perpetual fear of attacks.
- The primary schools record very low school attendance as parents disallow their children from attending school as soon as there is an attack or rumours of attack.

- Most secondary school students risk attending school even in the face of attack
- Security measures are put in place to protect tertiary institutions so, most student often risk attending classes.

## CONCLUSION

Boko haram has become a threat to the entire nation. Their activities have crippled the socio-economic life of the entire citizenry. Owolabi (2013) stated that the activities of Boko Haram sect have rubbished the image of Nigeria and have hampered the quest of achieving millennium Development Goals (MDG'S) as well as vision 2020. Since the advent of a new dimension to terrorism in Nigeria, it is clear that the fabric of Nigeria economic foundation has really been shaken. The impact of the activities of the dreaded Boko Haram has brought physical, psychological and economic damage to the Nigeria's fragile economy. There is a sharp drop in the commercial activities in the North as foreign investors are gradually diverting from Nigeria due to the increasing security crisis. Amadu (2013) noted that with the increased intensity of bombing in the North, there is a strategic mass movement of individuals from the most attacked northern states especially in early 2012. The men mostly businessmen stay behind to defend their livelihood. This sudden movement directly affects school attendance among children. Some were forced to change location and school. With the massive killing of youth coppers serving in the Northern Nigeria in 2010 most corpers especially southerners reject postings to the north thereby affecting the manpower needs of the people.

Though, the federal government effort in curbing their activities have made appreciable success the few students in the secondary and tertiary schools risk school attendance. Most primary school children have permanently dropped out of school either as a result of the death of their parents or as a result of the fear of sporadic attacks.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is therefore recommended that:

- The federal government should post security personnel to guide all schools from primary to tertiary institutions in Nigeria
- Free bus services should be available for children in the urban areas to take them to and from school under tight security.
- Security studies should be enshrined in the school curriculum in Nigeria.
- Secondary school students should be properly monitored by parents and government agencies to ensure that they don't develop positive desire for Boko Haram activities.
- The immigration department should check the migration rate of people.
- School heads should be given adequate orientation on how to face the challenges of Boko Haram.
- The rural schools should not be neglected as security men should be drafted to security risk areas.
- Adequate school attendance record should be kept by teachers.

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