

School children abduction in Nigeria: Implication for educational development in northern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study examines school children abduction in Nigeria and its implication for the educational development in northern Nigeria. The main objectives are to examine the effects of school children abduction on the educational development of the Nigerian child as well as the implications of school children abduction on the educational development in northern Nigeria. The study adopts a qualitative approach and relied on data collected through secondary source. The work is situated on Queer Ladder Theory (QLT) propounded by Daniel Bell (1919–2011), an American sociologist, who tend to explain the instrumental nature of organized crime as a desperate method of socioeconomic empowerment and social advancement. The study revealed that between 2014 and 2021, gunmen kidnapped over 1,500 students, mostly girls, and about 1,280 teachers and pupils have died and over 1,400 schools have been destroyed. The study also revealed the effects of school children adoption to include: reductions in teacher recruitment, falls in student enrollment and lowered rates of transition to higher education levels. The implication is that it will lead to lack of foreign investment in the education, decline in the national economy; a negative image of the nation; and a decrease in the passion and interest of Nigerian children in education. It therefore recommended among other things adequate security for schools in the region, combating of banditry with all seriousness and surveillance of schools in the northern part. The study concludes that kidnapping of schoolchildren in Northern Nigeria had a profoundly detrimental impact on the region's educational advancement.

Keywords:

Kidnapping, Education, Development, Security, Investment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Insecurity in Nigeria has assumed very frightening dimension following the mindless attack on schools and subsequent abduction of school children in Northern part of Nigeria. The incessant abduction of school children kept many Nigerians worried due to the significant role education play in national development. Globally, education is seen as a powerful tool for bringing about and maintaining social change in human cultures as well as determining their future. Education is viewed as being essential to social reconstruction in addition to being a means of promoting upward social and economic mobility (Ifenkwe, 2013). There are many different meanings and interpretations of the concept of education. Therefore, education in its broadest sense refers to the act of passing along positive attitudes and societal ideals from one generation to the next. It aims to socialize people in order to give them the appropriate behavioral traits that are compatible with the culture in which they live (Ademola & Ojo, 2018:24). Additionally, education is the process of instructing, preparing, and studying in classrooms and institutions in order to build information and skills and educate people to coexist peacefully in society. In light of the aforementioned, the phrase "You are not enlightened" is used to describe someone who behaves in a manner that is distinct from that of "the educated" or "the wise one," or someone who has attended school. Any culture that wants to experience progress in all areas—social, economic, religious, etc.—must prioritize education. The foundation of development is education. But regrettably, there are other issues that divide Nigerian education. The issues that have plagued Nigeria's secondary school system are numerous and unending. These include but not limited to: dearth of qualified teachers; inadequate funding and abduction of school children which is the main focus of this paper. It is instructive to note that the senseless attacks on Nigerian schoolchildren from December 2020 to August 2021 resulted in the abduction of hundreds of children and sparked a public outcry over the state's seeming incapacity to stop such incidents. This most recent spate of kidnappings comes after other well-known cases of widespread abduction and student murder. with around 97,000 primary public and private schools. Nigeria has the largest educational system in Africa, with a basic education sector roughly comparable to the 98,000 public elementary and secondary schools in the United States (Abiodun, 2013). There are 32,800 more secondary public and private schools in

Nigeria, thousands more Islamic schools, and countless more colleges and vocational institutions (Adamu, & Michelle, 2013). The size of Nigeria's education system is comparable to that of the United States, which highlights the immense problem of protecting every pupil and every school against armed attacks that are either planned or unplanned, as is the situation in Nigeria. Following the kidnapping of 276 girls from a public secondary school in Chibok, Borno State in northeastern Nigeria, in 2014, the quiet, unremarkable town gained international notoriety (Adelaju, & Alexis, 2013).

With 111 girls still missing, the Bring Back Our Girls movement continues to organize daily protests in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, and weekly protests in Lagos, the largest city in that country, following the kidnapping of the Chibok girls, as they came to be called. In addition to undermining educational advancement in the North, the present banditry wave poses a possible threat to national security. The North is currently dealing with a painful scenario in which elementary school children, secondary school students, and undergraduates from tertiary institutions are being kidnapped on a daily basis. This condition has negatively impacted the region's chances for the development of education. It is apparent that Boko Haram's assault on western education is what has caused the horrible position we are in today. The kidnapping of 276 female students from the Government Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State, in the early hours of April 14, 2014, further demonstrates Boko Haram's determination. The group's name, which literally means "Western education is forbidden," serves as further evidence of this. This action naturally sparked indignation and criticism on a global scale, which culminated in the well-known "Bring Back our Girls" movement. Ero (2021) then observed that further brazen kidnappings had occurred in other schools. Several male students have also lost their lives in this ferocious and bloody battle against western education, including 42 at the Government Secondary School in Mamudo Village, Yobe State, on July 6, 2013, 44 students and teachers at the College of Agriculture in Gubi, Yobe State, on September 21, 2013, and about 8 students at Kano State School of Hygiene, June 23, 2013. The kidnapping of 104 students from the Government Secondary School Girls Science and Technical College, GGSTC, Dapchi in Yobe State in February 2018 has also rekindled public concern about the security of schools and the education of girls in the

region's North-East. According to a 2017 UN report, "115 youngsters, including 38 boys and 77 girls, had been utilized as human bombs, which is six times more than in 2016." Like the 112 out of 276 Chibok girls and Leah Sharibu, the Christian Dapchi schoolgirl, many people may have tragically embarked on a trip with little prospect of return (Ero 2021:19). It is in the light of the foregoing this research paper, attempts a scientific investigation of the implication of kidnapping of schoolchildren on the advancement of education in the northern Nigeria.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

- To examine the effects of school children abduction on the educational development of the Nigerian child.
- To find out the implications of school children abduction on the educational development of the Nigeria state

1.2 Research Questions

- What are the effects of school children abduction in Nigeria on the educational development of the Nigerian child?
- What are the implications of school children abduction on the educational development of the Nigeria state

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Educational Development in Nigeria

Every nation in the world, especially the developing ones, has been working to raise the standard of her education. Nigeria is not exempt either; there has been a significant shift toward providing its inhabitants with high-quality education. The concept of education is difficult to describe and can be rather obscure. The function that education must play in society as one of its institutions makes the discipline's complexity necessary. From an etymology perspective, 'education' is derived from two latin words "educere" which means "to lead out" and "educare" which means "to bring up" respectively. This indicates that education helps someone develop their skills and bring them out (Ifenkwe, 2013). According to Adamu and Michelle (2013), education is an interaction between a teacher and a student that occurs under the instructor's control and is intended to cause the desired change in the student's behavior. According to Hasan (2014), education is a business that aims to impart values, attitudes, and skills to society's members. Adamu and Michelle's (2013) observation that education is a socializing agent that provides all of its beneficiaries with the tools they need, such as knowledge, skills, attitude, cultural values, language, and social skills, to enable them to conform to the demands/desires of their society, was an excellent way to support this. The definitions given above demonstrate how education benefits a person in all respects. It is evident that raising kids who are ready to enter tomorrow's society would be crucial to Nigeria's future development (FGN, 2004). However, the provision of high-quality education is necessary for the generation of children of this caliber. Nigeria's current educational system is a development of the previous one. The current state of education is greatly impacted by it. According to HNO (2014), "referring to the Education for All (EFA) declaration adopted in Jomtien declares that: every person shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their fundamental needs," the Nigerian educational system is said to have had a negative impact at the secondary level, which has decreased the quality of education in Nigeria (Ademola & Ojo. 2018).

Nigeria implemented the present 6-3-3-4 system in order to meet the demands of 21st-century education. Such a system of education maintains high-quality instruction with proper implementation and genuine classrooms. This is so because the curriculum was created to meet the educational needs of every student, making it an education for everyone and an education for a way of life. The contemporary educational system places a strong emphasis on academic education, technology, and other learning that is necessary to suit the educational needs of the intellectually and technologically driven 21st century. This makes its learning process multifaceted since it includes sociocultural, political, economic, scientific, and technological aspects of life, which make up the majority of the learning experiences necessary to lead a successful life in the modern world. because of its consistently logical and continuous foundation for teaching and learning (Ademola & Ojo, 2018). When all facets of the school and its surrounding educational community, as well as students' rights, development, protection, and participation, are made a part of the school system, along with good implementation and functional means to make its learning process effective to sustain quality education, quality education can be attained. To accomplish all of these goals, learning should be

centered on enhancing students' intelligence, technological expertise, and other life skills in order to increase students' capacity to behave responsibly through the acquisition of suitable attitudes, significant knowledge, and practical abilities (Ero, 2021). In a climate of student kidnapping and insecurity, the aforementioned cannot be accomplished.

2.2 Review of School Children Abduction in Nigeria

School buildings and pupils have been under attack ever since Boko Haram redefined abductions in the nation. 276 female students, predominantly Christians, between the ages of 16 and 18, were abducted on April 14, 2014, from the Government Girls Secondary School in the Borno State town of Chibok by the Islamic terrorist organization Boko Haram. The girls were present for the raid because they needed to take their final Physics examinations despite the school having been shuttered for four weeks owing to deteriorating security situations. No fewer than 57 of the schoolgirls fled the scene of the tragedy by jumping from the trucks they were riding in, while additional schoolgirls have been repeatedly saved by the Nigerian Armed Forces. One of the missing girls, Amina Ali, was discovered in May 2016. However, some of the girls may have passed away. The rebels equally turned their attention to Yobe, another state in the volatile North-West. 110 students were abducted after Boko Haram raided the Government Girls Science Technical College (GGSTC) in Dapchi on Monday, February 19, 2018, according to the Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed. Because the attackers arrived in camouflaged vehicles, many town residents believed they were security personnel when they assaulted the all-girls boarding school. According to reports, the 14-year-old Christian who refused to convert to Islam was not released with the others. Leah Sharibu has not yet been freed by the gunmen, despite the fact that the majority of the pupils have been reunited with their family after they were released by their captors on March 21, 2018.

Between December 2020 and August 2021, there was an unceasing wave of kidnappings that drew increased attention to the issue of school safety in Nigeria and made many Nigerians vocally wonder why there is such a high level of danger throughout the nation. There were at least twelve mass abductions at Nigerian schools in just nine months, along with four further abduction attempts. (Aly & Chris, 2021) More than 300 lads from the Kankara Government Science Secondary School were kidnapped on December 11, 2020, and released a week later. (Adelabu, 2021). On the evening of December 19, 2020, a kidnapping gang that had already kidnapped four persons arbitrarily arrested 80 pupils at an Islamic school in Dandume, roughly 60 kilometers from Kankara. By the time police and a community self-defense group arrived, all 84 had been released. (Adelabu, 2021). There were two mass abductions in February 2021. Twenty-seven pupils were among the forty-two persons who were abducted from the Government Science College in Kagara, Niger State, on February 17, 2021; one other student was killed in the attack. (Altine, 2002). Then, on February 26, 2021, 279 to 317 pupils from the Government Girls Secondary School in Jangebe, Zamfara State, were abducted. Three attempted abductions and two additional mass abductions, all in Kaduna State, occurred in March 2021. 39 students were kidnapped from the Federal College of Forestry Mechanization in Mando on March 11. (Amnesty International, 2021). The Nigerian army was able to stop an attack on the Turkish International Secondary School in Rigachikun on March 13, 2021, following a tip-off.

While in Rigachikun, the same army force responded to a distress call from the nearby Federal School of Forestry Mechanization in Afaka, which was being attacked, to rescue 180 persons, among them 172 pupils. Nigerian military, police, and "volunteers" worked together to stop an attack on the Government Science Secondary School in Ikara on the evening of March 13, 2021, and into the early hours of the following day. Three teachers were kidnapped from Ube Primary School in Rama, Birnin Gwari, on March 15. There were no kids taken (Appiah, Nyamekye, Josephine, & Carolyn 2021). There were two kidnappings in April. Twenty students and three faculty members from Greenfield University in Chikun, Kaduna State, were kidnapped on April 20. The remaining students were released in May after their kidnappers killed five of them. Four pupils from the King's School in Gana Ropp, Barkin Ladi, Plateau State, were abducted on April 29, 2021. Three soon managed to flee (Appiah, Nyamekye, Josephine, & Carolyn 2021). 136 students and several teachers from Tgina, Niger State's Salihu Tanko Islamic School were kidnapped on May 30, 2021. The survivors were freed in August; one died while being held captive. (Babangida, 2021). 103 students from the Federal Government Girls College in Birnin Yauri, Kebbi State, were kidnapped on June 17. 121 students from the Bethel Baptist High School in Maramara, Kaduna State, were kidnapped on July 5. Nine children were kidnapped on their way

home from the Islamiyya school in Sakkai village in Faskari, Katsina State, on August 17; on August 16, fifteen students, a teacher, and his family, were taken from the Bakura College of Agriculture in Zamfara State all in 2021. (Babangida. 2021).

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Theory Queer Ladder (QLT) was utilized in this essay. Daniel Bell (1919–2011), an American sociologist, is credited with creating the Queer Ladder Theory (QLT), which he did in an effort to explain the instrumental nature of organized crime as a desperate method of socioeconomic empowerment and social advancement. Since then, this theoretical viewpoint has given rise to a well-liked theoretical framework that is frequently used in modern crime studies. The fundamental premises of QLT are that organized crime is an instrumental behavior, a means to a goal, a tool for social ascent and/or socioeconomic advancement, and a way to amass wealth and consolidate control (Okoli&Orinya, 2013). The idea that organized crime thrives in settings where the government's ability to command, sanction, and discourage crime is weak; when public corruption is rampant; and where options for legitimate livelihood are few is sometimes attributed to Queer Ladder Theory (Okoli &Orinya, 2013). In these conditions, there is a strong incentive to commit crimes yet there is little to prevent people from leading a life of crime. In other words, the advantages of committing a crime outweigh the risks and/or expenses associated with it. This serves as a cover for criminal impunity and entrepreneurship (Okoli &Orinya, 2013). When used in the context of this research, QLT helps one accept the banditry's pervasiveness in Nigeria. In this regard, it has been noted that the practice of kidnapping schoolchildren in Nigeria is linked to insecurity and corruption, and that this has a detrimental impact on the advancement of education. The socioeconomic unrest that is currently pervasive in the state and the resulting livelihood crisis, together with the seeming indifference of important government authorities towards resolving the terrible situation, are all detrimental to the educational development of Nigerian children. In QLT, the term "Ladder" refers to an undesirable pattern of social mobility. Therefore, individuals who turn to organized crime, such as banditry and kidnapping, do so out of a desperate desire for financial gain and socio-economic empowerment at the expense of Nigeria's educational advancement, a necessary result of this tendency is a rise in crime, a feeling of unease, and the kidnapping and abduction of schoolchildren (Okoli &Orinya, 2013).

3. METHOD OF STUDY

This study used the library sources approach as a qualitative study and specifically attempted to identify pertinent literature, including recent media coverage on schoolchildren kidnapping in Nigeria. Utilizing secondary sources of information from a variety of books, journals, seminar papers, lectures, newspapers, and magazines, the methodology uses analytical reasoning. All of these turned out to be really useful as informational resources. This approach was chosen because it was thought to be the best way to get factual information concerning kidnappings of schoolchildren and how they would affect the nation's educational advancement in northern part of Nigeria. It is also thought to be the most effective way to comprehend the consequences and scope of kidnappings in northern Nigeria.

3.1 Effects of School Children Abduction in Nigeria

In northern Nigeria, kidnappings at schools are a severe threat to education. The region already has the poorest educational statistics in the nation, and ongoing attacks on schools have compelled six states to close most or all of their educational institutions until security is once again restored. Additionally, it might have an impact on school enrollment rates, which are already low in the North due to cultural hostility against "western education." Additionally, these abductions can lead teachers and other school employees to leave their jobs and go for work elsewhere, preventing more kids from receiving a quality education. The crises and consequences of student kidnappings and school invasions according to the Human Rights Watch report from 2021 shows that from 2014, about 1,280 teachers and pupils have died and over 1,400 schools have been destroyed. The crises have further destabilized the educational system, where the security of students, instructors, and schools was in grave jeopardy. Attacks against schools has resulted in death, injury, and the loss of educational infrastructure in the short term. The long-term effects also include reductions in teacher recruitment, falls in student enrollment, lowered rates of transition to higher education levels, and disruptions in attendance. Attacks on higher education have also hampered research and

instruction and led to a brain drain. All of the aforementioned factors could prohibit Nigeria from recognizing its right to education, as well as other rights, and from accomplishing its development and educational objectives. The ability of schools to shield students from social risks has, most importantly, been undermined by attacks on education, making students more susceptible to sexual and other forms of exploitation like child labor or child soldiers, early marriage and pregnancy, as well as other harmful influences.

Adegoroye (2021) noted that Dr. Obadiah Mailafia, a former deputy governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, had expressed regret over the widespread and evil practice of kidnapping students, particularly in the North, saying that it would worsen the region's regress and jeopardize their education. Between 2014 and 2021, gunmen kidnapped over 1,500 students, mostly girls, in the states of Borno, Kaduna, Zamfara, Yobe, Katsina, and Niger in return for ransom. On the other hand, the terrible scenario of school invasion and kidnapping of schoolchildren has resulted in the closure of public and private educational institutions across the majority of North Nigeria. For instance, the Kaduna State government sent a memo in March 2021 through the Ministry of Education ordering all heads of both public and private institutions to close due to the current security situation. Similarly, the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja closed all schools under its control and ordered students and pupils to go on an indefinite holiday because it was displeased with the level of security risks. Additionally, it was discovered that all headmasters and principals of Catholic Mission Schools in Abuja have been ordered to close until the federal government demonstrates that it has a real plan to stop school-kidnapping across the nation (Kangyang&Aipe, 2021:12).

3.2 Implication of School Children Abduction to Education Development in Northern Nigeria

The Boko Haram insurgency has had a significant impact on the educational sector since the sect has targeted schools and institutions, causing injuries, deaths, kidnappings, and facility destruction. Conflict and instability have a direct and compounding detrimental effect on children's access to school, the availability of learning environments and resources, and the competence of instructors (HNO, (2014:8). Furthermore, Kangyang and Aipe, (2021:12) revealed that during the incessant attack on schools, the federal government instructed all headmasters and principals of Catholic Mission Schools in Abuja to shut down until they could present a concrete strategy to end school kidnapping throughout the country. On October 5, 2015, teachers' day, Michael Olukoya, the national president of the Nigerian Union of Teachers, stated that the Boko Haram insurgency has resulted in the deaths of 600 teachers (Pulse.ng, 2015). In Borno State, around 882 classrooms were damaged as of August 2013, and Yobe State closed all schools from June to September 2013. (Awortu, 2015). Over 200 female students from the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok were abducted on April 14, 2014 (Hassan, 2014), which has deterred parents from enrolling their kids and wards in school and led to the withdrawal of those who were already enrolled. All of these incidents occurred in a region that already had poor educational standards prior to the insurgency, and additional attacks will weaken the area and the educational system as a whole in the near future. This is because more youth will be out of school, illiterate, and unemployed, making them more susceptible to being enlisted as suicide bombers and terrorists. As a result, Awortu (2015:217) claims that "there is propensity that violence will develop and continue in Nigeria when the rate of illiteracy and school dropout is high." Accordingly, the impact of kidnapping schoolchildren on the advancement of education in Northern Nigeria may result in: A lack of foreign investment in the educational sector because of the unreliable security system; Loss of lives and property; and the forced closure of numerous schools because of concerns that the area is unsafe for learning and habitation. Besides, it can result in a decline in the national economy; a negative image of the nation; and a decrease in the passion and interest of Nigerian children in education. And the kidnapping of schoolchildren predicts a decline in educational advancement in the affected states.

4. CONCLUSION

From the aforementioned, it is clear that the kidnapping of schoolchildren in Northern Nigeria has had a profoundly detrimental impact on the region's educational advancement. 2014 saw the first reported kidnapping of schoolchildren in Nigeria when 276 girls were abducted from the Government Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State, in the country's northeast. Since then, the number of school attacks and student kidnappings has increased and extended throughout the northern

region of the nation. These horrifying kidnappings frequently lead to the immediate closure of every school in the affected states, bringing an abrupt end to the afflicted pupils' education. Even after the start of classes again, it deters parents from enrolling their kids in school, leaving the kids traumatized and afraid to learn in a classroom.

4.1 Recommendations

Base on the findings from this study the following recommendations were made.

- i. The government should see to it that the basic necessities of life are provided for the citizens. Findings show that the government's attitude toward its citizens' fundamental desire for existence is one of the root reasons of schoolchildren abductions.
- ii. As soon as possible, the level of leniency in the law implementation procedure for prosecuting offenders needs to be addressed in order to effectively combat the kidnapping of schoolchildren. The perpetrators of this heinous act should be detained so that a complete investigation may be conducted and that they can receive the just penalty; otherwise, the threat will continue to grow.
- iii. According to research, bandits can easily attack schools with little to no military protection, portraying Nigeria as a failed state. The government should provide the citizens with adequate protection from internal and external aggressors and ensure that the security forces entrusted with such duties do not become victims of the same crime or engage in the violation of citizens' human rights.
- iv. Every government countermeasure will also only be successful if problems with poverty, corruption, and poor governance are addressed openly.
- v. educational institutions should provide lectures for main and secondary victims of kidnappings or counseling on how to prevent being abducted.
- vi. Banditry should be combated from all angles as research indicates that it has a detrimental impact on a child's ability to learn in Nigeria.

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