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# **Impact Assessment Of Banditry On Polytechnic Education In Northwestern Nigeria: A Case Of Kaduna, Katsina & Zamfara States' Polytechnics**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Banditry is a serious menace to teaching and learning generally but most disturbing in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This study examined the overall impact of banditry on teaching and learning in some polytechnics in the North-West region of Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive research design of survey type. The population of the study comprises victims of kidnapping and banditry which are students and teachers of these Polytechnics in the selected area. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the victims of kidnapping and banditry across the study area (Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara, respectively) where the kidnapping and banditry in institutions are most prevalent. Four research questions were raised. The instrument used was titled “Impact of Banditry Questionnaire (IBQ)”. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was 0.75. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Research questions 1 and 2 were analyzed using frequency count and percentage, while research questions 3 and 4 were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient (PPMC) and independent sample t-test. The study revealed that banditry has a great impact on the students of higher institutions as it creates frequent fear on the victims, causes insomnia to the victims, affects students’ academic performance, causes Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms among victims and traumatizes the victims. Also revealed is that there is no significant difference on the impact of banditry on male and female students of these polytechnics in the North-West Nigeria. Consequently, the study recommends that Government should up their game and vigorously intensify efforts towards eradicating the scourge going forward.

**Keywords:** Impacts, Assessment, Banditry, Polytechnics, Education, North-West Region, Nigeria.

## **INTRODUCTION**

A nation's progress relies heavily on its citizens' access to quality education, which serves as a driving force for social and economic transformation. An educated population benefits not only individuals but also the nation as a whole, fostering attributes such as honesty, sincerity, productivity, creativity, and patriotism that contribute to national security and development. On a practical level, education equips citizens with lifelong skills and knowledge (Achimugu and Ibeh, 2023). However, Nigeria's North West region has been plagued by insecurity and instability due to terrorism, kidnapping, and armed banditry. This persistent banditry has severely disrupted economic activities and social development while challenging the government’s fundamental responsibility of safeguarding lives and property (Ibid. p. 4).

The frequent attacks on schools and the resulting mass abductions of students pose a significant threat to the future of education in the region and the country at large. Students and teachers have endured various forms of violence, including kidnapping, murder, rape, and arson, leading to displacement and widespread fear. Many families no longer feel safe sending their children to school, and the widespread closure of schools due to banditry has had a detrimental impact on education in the North West. The escalating insecurity in Nigeria has profoundly affected the education sector, raising serious concerns for the nation's future.

At the outset, they referenced Olagunjoye (2023), highlighting that the North West has experienced low enrollment rates due to the dominance of Islamic education in the region, as many parents have yet to adopt Western education. According to their source, only 61% of children aged 6-11 attend primary school regularly, while just 35.6% of children aged 3-5 receive early childhood education. Several factors, including economic challenges and sociocultural norms, contribute to the lack of access to education in northern Nigeria, particularly for girls. In the North East and North West, female primary school net attendance rates stand at 47.7% and 47.3%, respectively, indicating that over half of the girls in these regions are not attending school. This data suggests that education levels in the North West were already poor before the rise in school-targeted attacks. The ongoing threats from bandits and religious extremists have further hindered efforts to improve education in the region. In light of this, the paper seeks to examine and discuss the implications of banditry on education in selected polytechnics in Nigeria's North West. It also aims to propose strategies to address and potentially eliminate this troubling trend in the region.

#### **Statement of the problem**

The North West region of Nigeria, comprising seven states—Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kaduna, Zamfara, Jigawa, and Sokoto—is widely recognized for its vulnerability to rural banditry. Among these, Katsina, Kaduna, Zamfara, Kebbi, and Sokoto are the most affected, with Katsina, Kaduna, and Zamfara emerging as critical hotspots (Premium Times, 2019, as cited in Achimugu and Ibeh, 2023). The region's history of banditry dates back to 1901, when a camel caravan carrying grains between western Hausa land and the Niger border was ambushed, resulting in the deaths of 210 merchants (Ibid., p. 6).

In recent years, the discovery of gold and the activities of illegal miners competing for control over gold reserves have exacerbated the activities of armed groups in the region. These groups employ tactics such as attacking and robbing villages and travelers, cattle rustling, abductions, ransom kidnappings, and sexual violence. Operating on a large scale, banditry has inflicted severe human and economic losses, disrupting agricultural activities and increasing the risk of acute food insecurity. The violence has upended livelihoods, heightened insecurity, and instilled fear among residents. In some cases, bandits even warn villages of impending attacks and enforce illegal levies on farmers seeking access to their lands (Wuyo, 2023).

Since the notorious abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls in 2014, there has been a troubling trend of bandits and terrorists targeting vulnerable school children. The first major incident following Chibok occurred in December 2020, when armed men attacked the Government Boys Science Secondary School in Kankara, Katsina State, abducting over 300 students. Similar attacks have since taken place at several institutions, including the Federal Government College in Birnin Yauri (Kebbi State), the Government Girls Secondary School in Jangebe (Zamfara State), Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic in Zaria (Kaduna State), the Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation in Kaduna, Greenfield University (Kaduna State), and Zamfara College of Agriculture and Animal Science in Bakura Local Government Area. Between 2014 and August 2023, over 1,680 schoolchildren have been kidnapped, with more than 180 killed, 90 injured, 60 school staff abducted (14 of whom were killed), and 25 school buildings destroyed (Vanguard, 18th August 2023).

A pressing concern remains unanswered: how do these organized groups, often traveling in motorcycle convoys, manage to transport large numbers of abducted students without encountering resistance from the security agencies tasked with safeguarding the region? In these incidents, both students and teachers are left defenseless, relying solely on the payment of hefty ransoms—often amounting to millions of

naira—for their release. Tragically, those whose families are unable to meet these ransom demands are sometimes killed by the bandits (Ibid. p. 7).

It is important to note that banditry is not confined to the North West region alone. It is also relatively widespread in parts of the North Central region, with states such as Niger, Nasarawa, Plateau, and Benue emerging as significant hotspots in recent years. However, the focus of this paper remains on the North West region.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The primary objectives of this study are to evaluate the overall effects of banditry on the selected polytechnics, focusing on the following areas:

**Documenting Impacts:** Recording the effects of the attacks on students, staff, and academic activities, where such data is available.

**Assessing Trauma:** Examining the psychological and emotional trauma experienced by affected students, academic and non-academic staff, as well as the broader community.

**Providing Solutions:** Offering sustainable recommendations and advocacy against banditry, along with psycho-social support for victims, while urging the government to implement enhanced security measures.

**Gender-Based Analysis:** Investigating whether there are significant differences in the psychological and mental states of male and female students in response to banditry in the selected polytechnics.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guide the researchers in investigating the issues under review:

- (1) What are the psychological and mental effects of banditry on students in the selected polytechnics in North-West Nigeria?
- (2) How does banditry impact students' academic performance and their overall academic pursuits?
- (3) Are there significant differences in the psychological and mental states of male and female students regarding the fear of banditry?
- (4) How motivated are tutors and lecturers in these polytechnics to effectively carry out their primary responsibilities?

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The excerpt highlights the significant impact of banditry and kidnapping on education, particularly in North-West Nigeria, emphasizing its crippling effects on students, institutions, and broader societal development. Here's a summarized paraphrase of the key points:

Banditry and kidnapping have sparked extensive academic discussions, providing diverse perspectives but lacking detailed exploration of their impact on specific polytechnics. Scholars like Shu'aibu et al. (2015) and Lowe and Galea (2015) link these phenomena to severe psychological and cognitive consequences, including PTSD and long-term trauma. Victims often endure torture, sexual violence, and deprivation, leading to emotional, mental, and academic challenges that necessitate medical and psychological intervention. Banire (2021) and others underscore the widespread insecurity in Nigeria, noting that banditry has transformed the North-West into a theater of violence. States like Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kebbi, and Kaduna suffer daily from kidnappings, killings, and extortion, leaving residents in fear and forcing communities to negotiate with bandits for survival. The illegal exploitation of natural resources, particularly gold, exacerbates the crisis, turning regions like Zamfara into deadly conflict zones.

Education has been particularly hard hit, with many schools shut down in bandit-prone areas, leading to declining enrollments and disrupted academic activities. Parents are increasingly hesitant to send their children to school due to safety concerns, further threatening educational access and intergenerational human capital development. Traumatized students, whether directly targeted or witnesses of violence, often disengage from education, compounding the problem. The absence of education poses long-term security risks, as uneducated youth are vulnerable to recruitment by criminal groups. With Nigeria's population projected to reach 300 million in 15 years, failure to educate the younger generation risks

creating a societal crisis. Education remains essential to national stability, human capacity development, and safeguarding the rights and futures of students across the region.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study draws upon Sigmund Freud's classical psychoanalytic theory, which has long been foundational in discussions of trauma. Freud's emphasis on repression—the unconscious defensive mechanism of pushing distressing material out of conscious awareness—provides a framework for understanding the psychological effects of traumatic experiences. His work laid the groundwork for contemporary trauma theory (Herman, 1992; Putnam, 1989; Seigel, 1995; van der Kolk, 1991).

Freud identified two stages of repression: primal repression and after-pressure. Primal repression refers to the denial of instinctual desires from entering consciousness, often triggered by intense anxiety, particularly during early childhood. Over time, these repressed desires become internalized as part of the superego, which mediates between the id (pleasure-seeking instincts) and societal expectations. The second stage, after-pressure, involves further suppression of mental derivatives associated with the repressed material. Freud suggested that treatment for trauma involves reconnecting displaced emotions with their original content through catharsis, providing relief from symptoms.

This theoretical approach is especially relevant for understanding the psychological trauma caused by banditry and kidnapping, which often result in severe anxiety and conflict within victims. Trauma, in this context, encompasses any experience capable of inducing intense psychological distress. Unfortunately, Nigeria lacks sufficient professional counseling systems to support individuals dealing with the aftereffects of such events. This gap underscores the importance of applying Freud's framework to explore and address the psychological impact of these experiences.

A poignant example of this trauma comes from Abdu Gusau Polytechnic, Talata Mafara, one of the institutions included in this study. Approximately 18 months ago, two staff members, Sanusi Halilu Kaura and Awwalu Galadima Shinkafi, were kidnapped while performing their duties. Sanusi, a non-academic staff member, had a ransom of ₦5 million demanded by his captors. Despite his friends and colleagues raising ₦4 million through contributions, the bandits killed him before the ransom could be delivered. Awwalu, though released after his ransom was paid, suffered post-kidnap trauma, experiencing hallucinations and severe psychological distress that ultimately led to his death within two weeks of his release.

These cases illustrate the devastating psychological and emotional toll that banditry and kidnapping inflict on victims and highlight the urgency of addressing trauma in affected communities. Freud's psychoanalytic theory provides a valuable lens through which to understand and propose interventions for these deeply troubling experiences.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study employed a descriptive research design of the survey type. The study's population consisted of students from selected Polytechnics who had been victims of kidnapping and banditry. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select victims from areas where banditry and kidnapping are most prevalent, specifically Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara. Four research questions were formulated. The data collection tool used was called the Impact of Banditry Questionnaire, with a reliability coefficient of 0.75. The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Research questions 1 and 2 were analyzed through frequency counts and percentages, while research questions 3 and 4 were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient (PPMC) and independent sample t-test.

**RESULTS**

The findings of this study were derived from the four research questions, which were addressed using the data collected and analyzed as follows:

**Research Question 1:** *What are the psychological and mental effects of banditry on students in the selected polytechnics in North-West Nigeria?*

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of respondents' answers to psychological effects of kidnapping

S/N	Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1.	Banditry creates frequent fear.	98 (72.50%)	19 (29.29%)	10 (4.19%)
2.	Banditry causes insomnia to the victim.	95 (60.50 %)	48 (30.57%)	14 (8.91%)
3.	Banditry traumatizes the victims	100 (63.69%)	36 (22.92%)	21 (13.37%)
4.	Banditry leads to lack of concentration to the victim	91 (57.96%)	40 (25.47%)	26 (16.56%)
5.	Banditry beclouds human mind against optimal productivity	99 (63.05%)	34 (21.65%)	24 (15.28%)
6.	Banditry leads to depression	100 (63.69%)	42 (26.75%)	15 (9.55%)

The study found that a significant majority of respondents (85.50%) agreed that banditry and kidnapping are closely related and instill constant fear in the minds of students. This finding aligns with the research of Muhammad et al. (2023) and Ukandu (2011), who noted that kidnapping and banditry undermine both individual and collective well-being. They explained that extreme fear clouds the human mind, making it difficult to achieve optimal productivity.

**Research Question 2:** *How does banditry impact students' academic performance and their overall academic pursuits?*

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of respondents answer to psychological effects of banditry

S/N	Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1.	Banditry affects students' academic performance	95 (60.50%)	46 (29.29%)	16 (10.19%)
2.	Banditry leads to frequent fear.	99 (63.05%)	42 (26.75%)	16 (10.19%)
3.	Banditry causes Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms among victims	101 (64.33%)	42 (26.75%)	14 (8.91%)
4.	Banditry traumatizes the victims	119 (75.79%)	36 (29.92%)	2 (1.27%)
5.	Banditry leads to lack of concentration to the victims	91 (57.96%)	40 (25.47%)	26 (16.56%)

The study also revealed that a majority of respondents (70.48%) agreed that banditry negatively impacts students' academic performance. This finding aligns with Bonanno et al. (2010), who identified that missed school, poor academic functioning, life disruptions, and prolonged stress contribute to adverse cognitive effects on victims of banditry both in the short and long term. Additionally, 64.33% of respondents agreed that banditry causes symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among victims, supporting Lowe and Galea's (2015) assertion that exposure to banditry leads to PTSD symptoms. Furthermore, 75.79% of respondents acknowledged that banditry traumatizes victims, thereby affecting their overall academic performance. This finding is consistent with Collins and Collins (2005), who noted that banditry induces a cognitive response that leaves trauma or injuries with long-lasting effects. Trauma impairs victims' ability to concentrate and perform optimally.

**Research Question 3:** *Is there any significant difference in the psychological and mental frame of mind between male and female students in relation to the overall fear of banditry and kidnapping?*

Table 3: One-sample t-test of the psychological impact of banditry and kidnapping on male and female students (sample t-test to be imputed properly by Halliru in the morning)

Test Value = 0						
	T	DF	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower+	Upper
Banditry	37.911	156	.000	44.61783	42.2931	46.9426
Kidnapping	35.627	156	.000	48.75159	46.0486	51.4546

Table 3 presents the findings aimed at determining whether there is a significant difference in the psychological and mental states of male and female students concerning their fear of banditry and kidnapping in the selected institutions. The results indicate no significant difference in the level of fear experienced by male and female students in higher institutions in North-West Nigeria. This is evidenced by a significance level of .000, which is less than the threshold of .005. Thus, both male and female students experience similar levels of fear and trauma when confronted with the terms "banditry" or "kidnapping."

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The frequent attacks on schools in the region have led to widespread school closures. For instance, in July 2021, the Kaduna State Government shut down 13 schools following the abduction of 150 students from Bethel High School. Similarly, Zamfara State Government closed all schools in the state after the abduction of over 200 girls from a school in Jangebe and 75 students from the Government Secondary School in Kaya. In Kano State, the then governor ordered the closure of ten schools on the outskirts of the state and five health training institutions. Yobe State instructed all boarding school students, except those in SS3 (Grade 12), to return home. Katsina State closed all its boarding schools after the Kankara abduction in December 2020, and Sokoto State shut down 16 boarding schools along its borders.

In some rural communities in Zamfara and Katsina states, bandits have converted abandoned primary schools into hideouts after teachers and students fled due to repeated attacks. For example, in Birnin Magaji Local Government Area of Zamfara State, a primary school headmaster was once confronted by bandits and instructed to dismiss his class for the day so they could use the classrooms to rest. Out of fear, the headmaster complied, sending all pupils home.

Another troubling consequence is the reluctance of teachers to remain at their posts or accept assignments in rural schools, fearing abduction. This exacerbates the existing shortage of teaching staff, leaving the few remaining teachers overburdened and stretching the already limited resources.

Although Zamfara State’s Abdu Gusau Polytechnic has never been directly attacked, its staff, both academic and non-academic, as well as students, have fallen victim to kidnappings while commuting to or from the school. For instance, the late Sanusi Halilu Kaura and Awwalu Galadima are remembered as tragic examples. May their souls rest in peace.

**CONCLUSION**

The paper aimed to critically assess the impacts of banditry and its implications for education in Nigeria's North-West region, with the goal of proposing strategies to address the challenges in Nigeria generally and the North-West in particular. However, due to limited funding from the institution, the study's scope was somewhat restricted. The findings revealed that the prevailing insecurity has had a devastating impact on education in the region and across Nigeria. The closure of schools by some state governments has served as a short-term response to the menace but is neither a permanent nor a productive solution. It was

concluded that both state and federal governments must implement effective measures to protect schools and prevent banditry from infringing on students' fundamental right to education.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Address Root Causes of Banditry:**

The Federal Government should tackle the underlying causes of banditry, such as poverty and unemployment, by providing youth with opportunities and development programs to engage them productively.

**2. Enhance School Security:**

Governments should deploy more security personnel to schools in remote areas and provide them with adequate tools and skills to prevent attacks. Installing CCTV cameras and alarm systems in schools should be encouraged. Furthermore, strong political will is required to ensure perpetrators of banditry are brought to justice.

**3. Strengthen Community-Based Intelligence:**

Community-based intelligence networks should be fostered, with local communities working closely with security agencies to share information on potential threats. Building trust between security agencies and communities is essential for effective collaboration.

**4. Provide Psychosocial Support:**

Deliberate efforts must be made to offer psychosocial support to students who have experienced trauma from abductions and attacks. Teachers and school staff should be trained in trauma care to better assist affected students.

**5. Promote Education Awareness:**

Community awareness campaigns should be launched to highlight the importance of education. Additionally, incentives to encourage school enrollment, such as those demonstrated through the introduction of the AGILE program, should be expanded and reinforced.

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