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## Impact of Insurgency on the Psycho-Social Adjustment of Senior Secondary School Students in North-Eastern Nigeria

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### Abstract:

*This study investigated the impact of insurgency on the psycho-social adjustment of senior secondary school students in North-Eastern Nigeria. The study employed descriptive survey as a research design. The population of the study consists of all the senior secondary school III (SSS III) students in North-Eastern Nigeria. Twenty-four (24) schools were randomly selected through simple random sampling from the six States that constitute North-Eastern Nigeria. Three hundred and sixty (360) students made up of 200 males and 160 females were selected through purposive sampling technique to form the sample size (60 students from each State). The instrument was a modified Likert-type questionnaire titled, "Students Psychosocial Adjustment Assessment Questionnaire" (SPA AQ). The instrument was validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria and the internal consistency coefficient obtained was 0.77. The instrument was trial-tested in six independent senior secondary schools selected outside the original sampled 24 schools. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha. The reliability index was found to be 0.74. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics in the form of mean and standard deviation for research questions, z-test was used to test the research hypothesis at  $\alpha=0.05$ . The findings of the study show that insurgency had positive impact on the rural and urban as well as male and female students' psycho-social adjustment. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that; Therapeutic programmes should be instituted by government with the involvement of trained clinical psychologists to address the psycho-social needs of traumatized students; individual and group psycho-social therapy should be applied along other support measures.*

**Keywords:** *Insurgency, psycho-social adjustment, senior secondary school students, urban and rural*

### 1. Introduction

Insurgency is the use of violence to seize, nullify and challenge political authority of a people (Amalu, 2015). The United States of America, Federal Bureau of Investigation (USFBI, 2015) defines insurgency as the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify and challenge constituted authorities of a region. It is usually a struggle in which the use of armed force is applied for subversive activities to create space for political and economic destabilization. Insurgency involves different actors with various aims, loosely connected in dynamic networks. To be successful, insurgency requires charismatic leadership, supporters, recruits, supplies and funding (usually from illegitimate sources) in order to operate successfully. One of the common features of insurgencies is armed confrontation and violence which often lead to loss of lives and property (Mizan, 2014).

Depending on the situation, insurgent groups receive support from actors based on their interests. Insurgency shares commonalities with terrorism especially, in its tactical strategies where terrorist tactics constitute part of its strategies (Awortu, 2015). The operational tactics are essentially those of guerilla warfare. The object is to intimidate, frustrate and raise the feeling of uncertainty, imminent danger and the loss of hope, so as to cripple or limit all aspects of human activity and normal livelihoods. National insurgencies in particular depend on ideology to unify, inspire and explain why the existing system is unjust or illegitimate, and rationalize the use of violence to alter or overthrow the existing system (Iyekekpolo, 2018). When insurgents overwhelm the society, the neutralization of the military becomes their objective with the aim of achieving national strategic stalemate (Sadau, 2015 and Sulleiman & Karim, 2015).

Insurgency constitutes one of the major recurring problems challenging psychosocial adjustment in complex societies with high ethnic nationalities and language groups like Nigeria (Ogunboyede, 2014). The first known insurgency attempt in Nigeria was the Movement to Liberate the Niger Delta People led by Major Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro. Pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria experienced inter-kingdom dynastic feuds, and insurgencies, some of which include Zango-Kataf (1999-2001), Tiv-Jukun Wukari (1999-2001), Itsekiri-Urhobo (1999-2000) and Ife-Modakeke (1999-2000). Psychologically, effective insurgent leaders are so dedicated to their cause that they will persevere even though the odds are against them. Similarly, they tend to believe so strongly in their cause that they become completely ruthless, willing to do anything necessary to protect their movement and weaken national cohesion (Awortu, 2015). Funding, equipment, and

supplies are the resources mostly seized, while in some insurgencies, like the ones in Nigeria, manpower is seized through violence as insurgents undertake forcible recruitment.

### *1.1. Causes of Insurgency in Nigeria*

There are several reasons why insurgency prevails in Nigeria. A few of them would be addressed below.

#### 1.1.1. Land Use Right

Claims to rights of any kind could generate conflict especially, where parties assert their rights in a competing way (Amalu, 2015). Similarly, conflicting property rights to land do generate into disputes. Critical examples in Nigeria prevail such as those between Fulanis and Tivs of Benue State, Fulanis and tribes of Jos and the Plateau State as well as Tivs and Jukuns of Taraba State. In all of these incidents, the Nigerian Land Use Act of 1978 and other statutes have not helped matters. In Plateau State, for instance, the problem of the 'indigene' and 'settler' dichotomy revolves around conflicting land-use rights and this dichotomy remains unresolved due to lack of judicial decisions and political will on the matter (Kwaja, 2018 and Adisa, 2012).

#### 1.1.2. Religious Extremism

The Nigerian system of traditional religion beholds that ancestors are regarded extension of the world of the living where supernatural beings are revered (USFBI, 2016). This explains why the use of kola nuts, pouring of libation and animal blood as rites of land agreement, and settlement of dispute are regular features of Igbo society. Tradition and culture have been discovered as major conflict triggers, and transformers. Insurgencies are caused by structural vulnerabilities in certain kind of states based on fundamentalist identity especially, when unchecked in a democracy with political elites factionalized along religious hegemonies (Alasia, 2015). Therefore, the fear of domination or marginalisation by religious majorities and minorities in Nigeria is one of the factors that have led to the upsurge of violent religious movements or religious extremism that as gradually metamorphosed into a form of terrorism (Dauda, 2018).

#### 1.1.3. Economic and Political Discrimination

Economic discrimination is the systematic marginalisation of a group from participating in positions or activities of higher economic value, such as employment, trade or profession, while political discrimination is a systematic or pattern of limitations in the form, process, practical outcome of the opportunities of groups to take part in political activities or to attain prestigious positions in governance (Mofoluwawo, 2014). Ethnic minorities often fall prey to these forms of discrimination, which often led to dissatisfaction and tendencies for movements towards insurgency (Chikodiri, Nwangwu & Edeh, 2017).

#### 1.1.4. Poverty

Poverty is the cause of many of Nigeria's problems. Poverty is a lack of command over basic consumption needs, resulting in a situation where a person's basic needs far exceed the available means of meeting them (Gangas, 2017). The social response to poverty is motivated by psychological factors lead to feelings of frustration among the poor. It will also breed hatred, mistrust and anger. These psychological elements lead to loss of faith, impatience and hopelessness which invariably, lead to a point of indifference between life and death and invite insurgency to its midst (Raymond, 2014).

#### 1.1.5. Unemployment

The vicious cycle of poverty includes the element of unemployment which encourages antisocial conducts (Adesina, 2013). This is why employment is a necessary component of a basic needs-strategy of development, both as a means and also as an end. The benefits of employment are hardly contestable. Employment yields an output and provides an income to the employed, and it gives the employed person the recognition of being engaged in some occupation worth his while and dignity. Unemployed persons are likely to gang up against constituted authorities with the ultimate aim to decent and insurgency (Iwu, 2015).

### *1.2. Types of Insurgency*

Insurgencies can be categorized in a number of ways; two of the most common ways are to distinguish insurgencies by the primary methods they employ (Amalu, 2017). These categories are archetypes, however, and many insurgencies exhibit characteristics combining multiple types, or their goals may evolve during the course of the conflict. In some conflicts, multiple insurgent groups may operate simultaneously, either competing with one another or setting aside the fact that they may have differing views on post conflict governance to form temporary alliances against the government. Revolutionary insurgencies seek to replace the existing political order with an entirely different system, often challenging the economic and social structures of government (Addaney, 2016). Different insurgent groups exist to serve different goals such as: reformist; separatist; resistance and commercialist.

### *1.3. Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria*

The Boko Haram insurgency first appeared in Maiduguri in Borno State, northeast Nigeria around 2002 (Azama, 2015). The group's objective was to establish an Islamic state and institutionalize Sharia law in Nigeria, particularly the northeast region. Boko Haram activities in the northeast of Nigeria have created a serious security threat to Nigeria and its neighbors in the Lake Chad region. The group engaged in guerrilla warfare using indiscriminate attacks on civilians, and

military forces. Despite efforts by the Nigerian government to combat the group, Boko Haram's activities continue to spread across the region. The Boko Haram insurgency in North-Eastern Nigeria has crippled social economic, activities as well as security (Suleiman, 2015).

To address the Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria, this study looked at Mao's Theory of Revolutionary War as a guide to understand the group. The research analysis revealed that the Boko Haram insurgency has closely adhered to Mao's theory of revolutionary war since its inception (Sadau, 2015). This means that Mao's theory of revolutionary war can be applied to the Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria in order to find more effective methods than have been used so far by the government of Nigeria to fight Boko Haram (Iyekekpolo, 2018).

#### 1.4. Concept of Psycho-Social

Psycho-social refers to the social relations existing between persons and others based on mental factors and functions, stressing cultural and societal influences (Usman, 2015). Psycho-social is relating to the combination of psychological and social behavior. It is the relationship between a person's fears and how he/she relates to others in a social approach setting. It also relates to relationship existing between individual male or female with opposite sex and how their sexual behaviours are manifested (Carew, 2015). The composite term psychosocial denotes the inter-connection between psychological and social processes and the fact that each continually interacts with the other (WHO, 2010) while the effect of terrorism on one's customary sense of security can be devastating. The people most affected psychologically and for the greatest period of time were those closest in some way, to the actual event (proximity, personal involvement, extent of change in life circumstances)

Psycho-social variables of students affected by insurgencies range from traumatic experiences due to sexual abuse, family separation, depression (Lakhani & Hussain, 2015). Traumatic events caused by insurgencies, especially urban and rural violence can impact on persons' psychosocial status. Feelings of shock and numbness, depression, anxiety, anger, and symptoms of or full-syndrome acute stress disorder (ASD) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) often are evident over an extended time period in adults and children who have experienced these traumatic events.

Research by Tousi (2013) suggests that pre-existing mood and anxiety disorders, but not psychotic disorders, are risk factors for the development of some type of post-disaster psychopathology. However, the findings from various studies (Dadarigasti, Amanpoor & Akbari, 2016 and Lakhani & Hussain, 2015) are inconsistent regarding the extent to which dissociative symptoms at the time of or shortly after the trauma (for example, feelings of numbness, perception that the events are happening to someone else, and/or amnesia) are predictive for the development of PTSD. The mid- and long-term effects of large-scale disasters include alcoholism, suicide, cardiovascular and other stress-related physical diseases, and family and vocational problems, emerging in some individuals who did not have problems in these areas prior to the disaster. Indeed, the aftermath of disasters that do not involve significant environmental damage or contamination is most likely psychosocial in nature (Amalu, 2017)

#### 1.5. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of insurgency on the psychosocial adjustment of senior secondary school students in North-Eastern Nigeria. Specifically, the study was to answer the following research objectives:

- Determine the impact of insurgency on the psychosocial adjustment of urban and rural senior secondary school students in North-Eastern Nigeria;
- Ascertain the impact of insurgency on psychosocial adjustment between male and female senior secondary school students in North-Eastern Nigeria.

#### 1.6. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- To what extent does insurgency impact on the psychosocial adjustment of urban and rural senior secondary school students in North-Eastern Nigeria?
- To what extent does the impact of insurgency differ on psychosocial adjustment between male and female senior secondary school students in North-Eastern Nigeria?

#### 1.7. Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following research hypotheses were answered at 0.05 level of significance:

- There is no statistically significant impact of insurgency on the psychosocial adjustment of urban and rural senior secondary school students in North-Eastern Nigeria;
- There is no statistically significant impact of insurgency on male and female senior secondary school students in North-Eastern Nigeria in terms of psychosocial adjustment.

## 2. Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey as a research design. The population of the study comprised all the senior secondary school III (SSS III) students in North-Eastern Nigeria. The North-Eastern Nigeria is made up of six states namely; Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe. Twenty-four (24) schools were randomly selected through simple random sampling from the six States from. Three hundred and sixty (360) students, comprising 200 males and 160 females were selected through purposive sampling technique to form the sample size (60 students from each State).

The instrument was a modified Likert-type questionnaire titled, "Students Psychosocial Adjustment Assessment Questionnaire" (SPAAQ). The instrument was validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria. They were requested to comment on the comprehensiveness of the instrument, the relevance of the items to the purpose of the study, the adequacy of the instrument for eliciting responses from the respondents as well as suggest ways of improving the items. Their comments, purposeful corrections and adjustments were useful in modifying the instrument for final administration, thus avoiding ambiguity and giving signal that the items in the instrument had met the required standards for actualizing the research questions and hypotheses. The internal consistency coefficient for the instrument was 0.74. The instrument was trial-tested in five independent senior secondary schools selected outside the original 24 sampled schools, but had similar characteristics as the original sample. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha. The alpha coefficient was found to be 0.71. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics in the form of mean and standard deviation for research questions, while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The z-test was employed because the sample was large (>30).

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Research Question One

To what extent does insurgency impact on the psychosocial adjustment of urban and rural senior secondary school students in North-Eastern Nigeria?

Variable	Urban		Rural	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Impact of Insurgency	4.87	0.78	3.56	0.63
Psychosocial Adjustment	3.74	0.86	2.90	0.74

Table 1: Impact of Insurgency on the Students' Psychosocial Adjustments

Table 1 show that urban students have a higher mean score than rural students in terms of psychological adjustment.

#### 3.2. Research Question Two

To what extent does the impact of insurgency differ on psychosocial adjustment between male and female senior secondary school students in North-Eastern Nigeria?

Variable	Male		Female	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Impact of Insurgency	5.83	0.76	7.24	0.91
Psychosocial Adjustment	4.51	0.98	6.22	0.89

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Impact of Insurgency on Psycho-Social Adjustment between Male and Female Students

Table 2 reveals that female students have a higher mean score than the male students on psychosocial adjustment.

#### 3.2.1. Hypothesis One

There is no statistically significant impact of insurgency on the psychosocial adjustment of senior secondary school students in North-Eastern Nigeria.

To answer this research hypothesis, z-test statistics is presented in Table 3.

Variable	N	Mean	S.D.	Mean Diff	Df	P	z-Cal	z-Crit	Decision
Urban	219	29.08	8.09	8.96	358	18.11	0.87	1.96	Accept Hyp.
Rural	141	20.12	4.98						
Total	360								

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and Z-Test Analysis for Impact of Insurgency on Urban and Rural Students' Psychosocial Adjustment

Table 3 shows that z-calculated was lower than z-critical. The hypothesis was therefore not rejected implying that there was no statistically significant impact of insurgency on urban and rural psychosocial adjustment of the senior secondary school students.

#### 3.2.2. Hypothesis Two

There is no statistically significant impact of insurgency on male and female senior secondary school students in North-Eastern Nigeria in terms of psychosocial adjustment.

	N	Mean	S.D.	Mean Diff	Df	z-Cal	z-Crit	Decision
Male	200	65.45	9.32	2.34	358	1.23	1.96	Accept Hyp.
Female	160	67.79	8.12					
Total	360							

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation and Z-Test Analysis for Impact of Insurgency on Male and Female Students' Psychosocial Adjustment

Table 4 shows that z-calculated was lower than z-critical. The hypothesis was therefore not rejected, implying that there was no statistically significant impact of insurgency on male and female senior secondary school students.

#### 4. Discussion

The study shows that urban students have a higher mean score than rural students in terms of psychological adjustment. This is an indication that urban secondary school students are psychosocially more adjusted than their rural counterparts. When this mean difference was subjected to z-test, it was found that there was no significant difference between urban and rural students in terms of psychosocial adjustment. This finding could be a result of exposures open to both urban and rural students in an insurgency because they are both open to similar experiences of warfare. This finding is in agreement with the findings of (Ofongo, 2016 and Patrick & Felix, 2013) who discovered that similar results.

The findings also showed that female students have a higher mean score than the male students on psychosocial adjustment. When this mean difference was subjected to z-test, it was found that there was no statistically significant impact of insurgency between male and female senior secondary school students. This is in line with the findings of (Ali, Atiya, Zakuan & bin Ahmad, 2018 and Amusan & Ejoke, 2017) who found that male and female students experience similar traumas irrespective of their gender.

#### 5. Conclusion

The findings of this study show that insurgency had positively impacted on the rural and urban as well as male and students' psycho-social adjustment.

#### 6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this, it is recommended that:

- Therapeutic programmes should be instituted by government with the involvement of trained clinical psychologists to address the psycho-social needs of traumatized students;
- Individual and group psycho-social therapy should be applied along other support measures;
- Government should provide adequate funding through legislation directed towards the affected students;
- Government should strengthen collaboration with global community in combating the menace of insurgency in north eastern nigeria.

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