



INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION AND INSURGENCY ON ATTRITION TENDENCY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN BORNO STATES, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The study was conducted to investigate the influence of religious orientation and insurgency on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two corresponding null hypotheses were formulated and tested. The research made use of the descriptive survey design in its investigation. Population of the study comprised of 20,910 students from which a sample size of 1,049 students were selected as respondents using the multistage sampling procedure. Instrument for data collection was a researcher-developed instrument tagged: "Social Environmental Variables and Attrition Tendency Questionnaire" (SEVATQ). The instrument was structured in line with a four-point Likert scale. Cronbach alpha was used to ascertain the reliability, a coefficient of 0.73 was obtained which indicated that the instrument was reliable enough for the study. Data were analysed using analysis of variance while hypothesis two was tested using independent t-test. The null hypotheses were rejected and the alternate accepted. The study found a significant influence of religious orientation and insurgency on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State. Based on the findings, recommendations were made that amongst other measures, governments both at the Federal and State levels should enact legislations that will put a check to inflammatory religious messages and doctrines that corrupts the adherents.



Introduction

Developed and developing nations of the world have come to see education, as a veritable means of development. As such, successive governments all over the world have budgeted huge amount money for education. In Nigeria for instance, teachers have been trained, school have been built and education has been made attractive. Even though much still remains to be done, there is no denying the fact that there has been a remarkable improvement in the provision of formal education in all sectors in Nigeria. However, it was observed that despite persistent efforts at encouraging schooling, it is not all students that stay to complete their schooling. Cases of attrition remains a critical issue that demands empirical investigation.

Religious orientation happens to be one of the factors contributing to attrition among students. Specifically, for a society like Borno Sate noted for wrong interpretation of religious doctrines, children may be raised to see formal educations as unnecessary. Osman and Ahmed (2021) see religious orientation as the basis or moral principles which guides and encourages members on how to behave and act in a peculiar manner as prescribed by their religious ordinances. Certain religious doctrines today do not accept western education. This can possibly discourage adherents of such faith from attending and completing school.

Beyond religious orientation but closely related is insurgency. The activities of insurgents have been found to adversely contribute to attrition tendency among secondary school students. In Borno State of Nigeria, the situation appears to be unique and somehow peculiar. Borno Sate in particular and the north-east in general has been a hoped of religious fundamentalism which has negatively affected formal education in the region. As observed by Abba (2021), the version of Islam in Borno State seems to be fundamentally different from what obtains elsewhere. The activities of insurgents has seriously affected formal education and has contributed immensely to attrition of students. The closure of so many schools in the State as a result of insurgency attacks, has negatively affected the chances of children accessing formal education and contribute to attrition tendency for those already in school.



From the foregoing, it may be apt to reason that religious orientation and insurgency play vital role in the educational process. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the influence of religious orientation and insurgency on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Developed and developing nations of the world see education, as a veritable means of effecting national development. This probably explains why governments invest in education. However, it was observed that many of the students do not stay to complete school. In Borno State for instance, cases of attrition has been on a steady increase since the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency coupled with the attendant effects of their activities on education. It was the burden of this study to investigate the influence of religious orientation and insurgency on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of orientation and insurgency on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

1. influence of religious orientation on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.
2. influence of insurgency on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. Is there any significant influence of religious orientation among secondary school students in Borno State?



2. Is there any significant influence of insurgency on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

- i. There is no significant influence of religious orientation on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.
- ii. There is no significant influence of insurgency on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Review of Related Literature

The role of religion is undeniable in the life of mankind. It is an acknowledged fact that religious-minded people perform better in every walk of life with negligible worries. Psychologists perceive religion as a basis of constancy of an uncertain world and the contribution to positive mental health. Religious orientation is used in the context of this paper to refer to a range of sociocultural systems, including designated behaviors and practices as well as moral and beliefs that relate humanity to supernatural transaction and spiritual elements (Brent, 2013).

Religious orientation can become a direct source of attrition tendency on the values and doctrines of the religious organization concerned. According to Corner (2012), acquisition of certain religious dogma may lead to develop certain character traits that may lead to attrition. For instance, when an individual is subjected to the misinterpretation of certain religious doctrines, he may develop behaviors that are considered anti-social which cause him to see formal education as of variance with his faith (Onyejiaku, 2004). This means that religion is not enough to imbue morality in an individual.

A growing body of research has consistently indicated that the frequency of religious practices is significantly and directly related to academic outcomes and educational attainment. Religiously involved people spend more time on their home works, work harder in school and achieve more as a result (Muller and Eddison, 2001). Equally, increased



religious attendance is correlated with high grades. In one study, students who attend religious activities weekly or more frequently were found to perform better than students who never attend (Nanville, Sikkings and Hernandez, 2008). According to their findings, more than 75 percent of students who become more religious during their college years achieve grades that are above average. The chance of students who are religious leaving school before completion was found to be very slim.

However, there may also be numerous negative contributions of religious orientation to attrition tendency. For instance, when the young ones are mis-indoctrinated by the religious group they belong, the school and society becomes vulnerable to the negative effects. The reason is because, the child is bound to exhibit whatever idea, beliefs, morals, values, practice and behaviours he has acquired through religious teachings in his interactions with his mates and others within and out of the school environment. The implication is that disparities in beliefs, values and practices always breed negative behaviours among students who feel disoriented and dissatisfied with the school policies, rules and regulations. The analysis is supported by Anamali (2006) who observed that religious orientation impacts on the behaviours of members in such a way that deviation and conflict occurs as a result of too much religiously (Kelli, 2014).

Osman and Ahmed (2021) conducted a study aimed at assessing the prevalence of religious orientation, academic stress and the use of religion as a means to cope with academic stress among first year undergraduates. Using a sample size of 321 first year students, data were collected using three separate instruments. Frequency analysis was used to examine the prevalence of stress and religious orientation, while Pearson Moment Correlation was used to analyse the relationship among the constructs. The test showed a high incident of religious orientation and religious coping among the sample of the undergraduates and how it affects academic performance but with no significant gender difference. The study sustained that a prominent determinant of students ability to cope with academic stress was religious orientation (Mapp, 2009).

Insurgency is a violent rebellion against authority waged by small, lightly aimed bend who practice guerrilla warfare from primarily rural bases (James & Laitin, 2003). According to Long (2018), insurgency is the use of political and military means by irregular forces to charge an existing political order. In the context of this study, insurgency refers to the Islamic



groups (any of Boko Haram or the Islamic State of West Africa Province, (ISWAP) operating in the North-East Nigeria that are violently opposed to Western Education and culture. One of the major factors contributing to the inability of children to complete school in the North East of recent, has been the activities of insurgents. According to the Nigerian Education Data Survey (2010), constant attack makes it even difficult for teachers and stakeholders persuade parents allow their children stay to complete school. Activities of the sect include kidnapping of school children, destruction of school properties, threat of teachers and administrators as well as killing of school children leading to a very low level of school attendance and enrolment (Grema, 2021).

Studies have established a negative effects of insurgency on education and its stakeholders. Abdullahi, Atsua, Amuda and Habu (2013) found that the level of school attendance and retention under crises situation in the North-East Nigeria has been very low. This is a result of violence, and threats to life of the children and their parents by insurgents. Shinge, Barde, Suraj and Garba (2002) compared the self-identity of 600 adolescents displaced as a result of Boko Haram insurgency with the non-displaced, who are far from insurgency – affected areas. Displaced adolescents were found to exhibit identity confusion – related symptoms. The implication of this is that many students who have been victims of Boko Haram insurgency suffer the psychological effects of the incidents. They find it difficult to concentrate in school and may possibly drop out.

Children in conflict-affected areas are not only less likely to be in school but also more likely to drop out. Survival to the last grade in poor conflict-affected countries is lower than in other poorer countries, that is 65% against 86%. The largest number of out of school children in conflictaffected countries is in sub-Saharan Africa according to a report by Global March (2014). In several long running conflicts, armed groups have attacked school children and teachers as a way to "punish" their participation in state institutions. There is deliberate destruction of school facilities and schools get bombed or looted in conflict, and are also used for military purposes. Such attacks result in growing fear among children to attend school and among parents to send their children to school (Hanadi, 2021).

Ugwumba and Ikokuj (2014) conducted a study on the effects of Boko Haram insurgency on the school system. Descriptive analysis using mean and standard deviation were used in analyzing the data collected. The study revealed that activities of the sect has



forced so many schools to close down mainly in Maiduguri, Borno State; Mubi, Adamawa State and in Gujba Yobe State. The study also found that insurgency contributes immensely to dropout among secondary school students in affected areas. The development therefore is in tandem with the position of the present study that insurgency is a prominent factor contributing to attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Methodology

The study used descriptive survey research design in its investigation. The descriptive survey is most appropriate in investigating events that had already occurred with the aim of identifying possible causes and relationships with the variables under investigation. According to Ndem, Udoh and Joseph (2003) the ex-post facto design is suitable when the researcher is seeking for information on a variable already in existence and which cannot be easily manipulated by the researcher. Ndiyo (2005) agreed that the descriptive survey research design is the most suitable design to adopt when gathering information on the effect or influence of an independent variable over a dependent one.

The design was therefore considered suitable for this study since the researcher was not able to manipulate the independent variables constituting social environment which are already in existence. Beyond this, the design allows the use of the questionnaire as research instrument for the collection of data through impersonal information supplied by the respondents on the influence of social environmental variables and attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Population of the study comprised of all the Senior Secondary Three (SS 3) students in Borno State, Nigeria. There are 20,910 Senior Secondary School 3 students in the 74 Senior Secondary Schools in Borno State. (Borno State Teaching Service Board, 2023).

A sample size of 1,049 SS3 students representing 5% of the population of study were selected for the study. According to Nwana (1981) if a population is in several thousands, a five percent or less sample will do. Multistage sampling technique was used in selecting the sample for the study. At the first stage a proportion of 20% of Local Government Areas were selected from the three Senatorial District, which gives a total of



six Local Government Areas. At the second stage, a proportion of 20% of secondary schools was elected in each of the Local Government Area, which gives a total of eight schools. At the last stage, a proportion of 30% of students which gives a total of 1,049 students.

The instrument for data collection was a researcher-developed instrument tagged: “Social Environmental Variables and Attrition Tendency Questionnaire (SEVATQ)”. The component scale of the instrument measured the influence of social environment exemplified by religious orientation, peer group, insurgency, family income, family structure, and learning environment on attrition among Secondary school students.

The instrument was divided into two parts: ‘A’ and ‘B’. Part ‘A’ of the instrument collected the bio-data information of the respondents while the part ‘B’ contained the questionnaire items to measure the influence of the variables on attrition in a Four Point rating scale of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

An introduction letter was obtained from the Head of Department, Educational Foundations to the principals of the schools selected for administering the research instruments. Three research assistants who are conversant with the language of communication in the study area trained to assist in administering the instruments. Items in the instrument were explained to the respondents with the assistance of their respective class teachers. The respondents were then guided to respond to the items and then copies of the questionnaire retrieved. Out of the 1,049 copies of the instruments administered, 1,022 were properly completed and returned. This gives 97.43% retrieval rate.

Data collected from the field were coded in a coded sheet before being analysed. The data were then analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using dependent t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analyses and Results

Research Question 1

Is there significant influence of religious orientation and attrition tendency among secondary school students?



Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Influence of Religious Orientation on Attrition Tendency

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	My religion encourages me to go to school	1022	3.72	.44	Very High
2.	Members of my faith are many in school	1022	3.69	.46	Very High
3.	My faith despises me attending school	1022	3.25	.85	High
4.	Many activities in my school are against my faith	1022	3.25	1.02	High
5.	Religious activities are often very boring to me.	1022	3.55	.74	Very High
6.	I enjoy getting involved in the activities of my religion.	1022	3.82	.38	Very High
7.	I love reading books and magazines on religion faith	1022	3.52	.66	Very High
8.	I am a very devoted member of my faith	1022	2.90	.94	Very High
9.	I prefer attending religious services than attending school.	1022	3.02	.91	High
10	I associated more with members of my faith than my classmates	1022	2.57	.92	High
	Grand Mean		2.57	.92	High



Decision rule: 1.00-1.4=Low; 1.5-2.4 = Moderate; 2.5-3,4 = High; 3.5-4.0 = Very High

The result in Table 1 shows the mean influence of religious orientation on attrition on tendency among secondary school students in Borno State. As shown in the table, the grand mean of 3.33 shows that religious orientation has a very high influence on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Research Question 2

Is there any significant influence of insurgency on attrition tendency among secondary school students?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the influence of insurgency on Attrition Tendency

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	I am afraid to continue in school because of Boko Haram attacks	1022	2.29	.84	Moderate
2.	I fear being kidnapped on my way to school.	1022	2.69	.93	High
3.	I still have sad memories of those killed by insurgents.	1022	3.37	.79	High
4.	I feel that schooling is a sin	1022	3.32	.68	Low
5.	Due to fear of attacks, my interest in school is dropping.	1022	2.34	.91	Moderate
6.	I agree with Boko Haram that western education should be discourage	1022	3.17		High
7.	I fear that my school may be attacked one day	1022	3.05	.92	High
8.	Learning a trade seems safer than being in school	1022	2.65	.62	High
9.	Displaced children will not be able to attend school again	1022	3.30	.92	High
10.	Refugee camps are not conducive for learning	1022	3.05	.99	High
Grand Mean			2.92	.84	High

Decision rule: 1.0-1.4 = Low; 1.5-2.4 = Moderate; 2.5-3.4 = High; 3.5-4.0 = Very High



The result in Table 2 shows the mean influence of insurgency on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State. As shown in the table, the grand mean of 2.92 shows that insurgency has a high influence on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀ 1 : There is no significant influence of religious orientation on attrition tendency among secondary school students.

Table 3: Dependent t-test Analysis of the influence of Religious Orientation on Attrition Tendency Among Students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-cal.	df	p-value
Religious Orientation	1022	26.11	2.56			
				33.77	1021	.000
Attrition Tendency	1022	28.99	3.59			

The result in table 3 shows that the calculated t-value of 33.77 for the influence of religious orientation on attrition tendency among students in Borno State is significant. This is because the pvalue of .000 is less than .05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of religious orientation on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State is rejected. Hence, there is significant influence of religious orientation on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

H₀ 2: There is no significant influence of insurgency on attrition tendency among secondary school students.

Table 4: Dependent t-test Analysis of the Influence of insurgency on Attrition Tendency among Secondary School Students in Borno State.



Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-cal.	df	p-value
Insurgency	1022	26.53	3.01			
				13.95	1021	.000
Attrition tendency	1022	28.99	3.59			

The result in table 4 shows that the calculated t-value of 13.95 for the influence of insurgency on attrition tendency among students in Borno State is significant. This is because the p-value of .000 is less than .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of insurgency on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State is rejected. Hence, there is significant influence of insurgency on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Findings

The following were the findings of this study based on data gathered and analysed:

1. Religious orientation has a very high influence on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.
2. Insurgency has a high influence on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that religious orientation has significant influence on attrition tendency among students in Borno state. In addition to that, it confirmed that Islamic religion has the highest influence on attrition tendency. This shows a significant influence of religious orientation on the chances of the individual staying to complete school given the types of influence he/she receives in sermons, pamphlets and messages from religious leaders. This consequently, affects his perception of education generally.



The finding is in consonance with the position of Corner (2012) who argued that the acquisition of certain religious dogma may lead a student to possess tendencies that can result in attrition. Some of these are born out of the wrong interpretation of certain religious doctrine that tend to consider western education an abomination. The findings also agree with Obasola (2017) who stated that religious belief and orientation have the powers of making the young adult develop behavior that are not in consonance with school rules and regulations. Corroborating the same position, Bendn (2000) explained the link between religious fanaticism and the practice of religious creed beyond limit and without moderation. When religious fanaticism are acquired by young minds, there is a tendency for them to become extremist. Their chance of persevering in school then becomes very slim.

Adding credence to the findings, Jodessa (2007) and Anamali (2006) stressed that too much of religion has the tendency to make the adherents regard society's norms and culture as distasteful. This has the propensity to make such individuals view education from a negative perspective. This is because, as agreed by Ano and Vasconselles (2005) a negative religious aspiration shows a religious doubt and struggle that lead to mal-adaptation. This implies that there is a correlation between religious orientation and emotional health leading to mal-adaptation. The Implications of these findings as they relate to the situation of secondary school students in Borno is that students should be given a correct religious orientation that

The finding agrees with Abdulalahi, Atsua, Amuda and Habu (2013) who found out that the level of school attendance and retention under crises situation in the North East has been very low. This has been a result of violence and the threat to lives of children and their parents by insurgents. In a separate study, Bilyaminu and Iya (2017) agreed with the finding stating that the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency has seriously affected the education sector in the North Eastern part of the country. The finding also supports the research by Umaru and Terhemba (2014) who found out that despite increased campaign and formulation of policy by government to encourage students' enrolment, retention and completion, the overall learning process of students and the completion of school among secondary school students in the North-East has not been encouraging.

The findings are also in agreement with the position of UNESCO (2000) that conflictaffected countries account for a large proportion of out-of-school children. This



implies that as found out by Global March (2014) children in conflict-affected areas are not only less likely to be in school, but also more like to drop out. Also, as found out by Nwankukwu (2014) activities of insurgents also lead to the closure of schools, abduction and killing of students' destruction of school facilities and looting. This leads to attrition and diminished school population. This may perhaps be the reason why so many secondary school children in Borno State find it difficult to complete school.

Based on the findings of the study, there is a statistical significant influence of religious orientation and insurgency on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State, Nigeria. The study discovered that religious orientation and insurgency have significant influence on the chances of the individual student completing his/her education. The study found that, specifically in the North East of Nigeria, insurgency and a faulty religious indoctrination have led many to assume western education a sin. This affects the acquisition of education by children born into such homes. Formal education remains crucial to sustainable human development globally. The study found out that regrettably, despite the functional role of education in virtually all sectors of human life, the tendency towards attrition by most learners threatens the very essence of education. Borno State presently, suffers a high rate of underdevelopment occasioned by insecurity, cultural challenges, religious bigotry, unemployment, and worst of all, insurgency. These affect the delivery of education negatively and contribute to attrition tendency in the students. Many of the students who leave school may never return and this poses a serious setback to development. It is evident and correct to say that if these variables are checked, the rate of attrition by students will be minimized.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, there is a statistical significant influence of religious orientation and insurgency on the chances of the individual student completing his education. The study found that, specifically in the North East of Nigeria, insurgency and a faulty religious indoctrination has led many to assume western education a sin. Beyond this, the poverty index in the region is so high that many families struggle to survive on low income. This affect the acquisition of education by children born into such homes. Formal education remains crucial to sustainable human development globally. The study found out



that regrettably, despite the functional role of education in virtually all sectors of human life, the tendency towards attrition by most learners threaten the very essence of education. Borno State presently suffers a high rate of underdevelopment occasioned by insecurity, cultural challenges, religious bigotry, unemployment and worst of all, insurgency. These affects the delivery of education negatively and contributes to attrition tendency in the students. Many of the students who leave school never return and this poses a serious setback to development. It is evident and correct to say that if these variable are checked, the rate of attrition by students will be minimized.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Governments both at the federal and state levels should enact legislations that will put a check to inflammatory religious messages and doctrines that corrupt the adherents.
- ii. The school environment should be made conducive for teaching and learning. Beside provision of functional learning facilities/classroom management technique and the general administrative style of the school needs to be improved upon to make learning interesting to the learners.
- iii. Gender bias in education should be eliminated. Both the girl child and the male child should be given equal access to education.
- iv. Professionally trained counselors should be employed in all public schools to serve as therapists for students with identifiable attrition tendency.

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