

The Symbolic Interactionism As An Alternative To The Adverse Effects Of Boko Haram On Universal Basic Education In Nigeria

Abba Abdullahi Dambam

Mohammed Yahai

Foundations Department, Aminu Saleh College of Education Azare

Abstract: The paper focused on the Symbolic Interactionism as an alternative to the effect of Boko Haram on Universal Basic Education in Nigeria. Symbolic Interactionists base their theoretical perspective on the image of humans; humans are pragmatic actors who continually must adjust their behavior to the actions of other actors. We can adjust to these actions only because we are able to interpret them i.e. to denote them symbolically and treat the actions and those who perform them as symbolic objects. This process of adjustment is aided by our ability to imaginatively rehearse alternative lines of action before we act. The process is further aided by our ability to think about and to react to our own actions and even ourselves as symbolic objects. Thus the interactionists theorist see humans as active, creative participants who construct their social world not as passive conforming objects of socialization. The paper also examined the brief history of Boko Haram, the effect of Boko Haram on Universal Basic Education which include burning of primary schools, attack on teachers and abduction of students etc. Therefore with symbolic interactionism meaningful and educative drama may be organized in local language to be broadcast in television and radio stations expressing vividly how good citizen interact and behave with family members, community and the society in general. Recommendation were made for the government to reduce the rate of unemployment, loans should be given to people to establish private business to reduce over depended on government and also Entrepreneurship Education should be taught in school to enable students establish business after schools.

Keywords: Symbolic Interactionism, Boko Haram, Effects, Universal Basic Education

I. INTRODUCTION

A theoretical perspective is a verbal image of society. It focuses the question that sociologists ask and the way they seek answers. It concerns with the ways in which sociologists seek to explain society and the behavior within it and also sociologists develop theories to explain social phenomena.

A perspective can thus be defined as Blumer (1986) did as "a frame of reference, a series of working rules by which a person is able to make sense of complex and puzzling phenomena. He further explicated, for the sociologists, the phenomenon referred to in this definition is social life and in taking a particular position towards its study, he or she makes a set of assumptions upon which analysis can be based and which typically include ideas about the nature of human

beings, society and of the interaction between the individual and society.

II. SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Symbolic interactionism owes its beginning to the development in sociological theory which followed the publication of George Herbert Mead's "Mind, Self and Society" (1863-1931). Mead and those who followed him argue that human beings are unique in their ability to use symbolic communication (use of ideas, concepts as distinct from mere gestures) in their social interaction. In this sense, language, which represents the symbol system in use, reflects certain universal symbols or structures which in turn reflect universal orders within the human mind. All communication is in some

way an expression or exchange of these symbols and the task of the interactionists is to discover or uncover the nature of these patterns of exchange (Merton, 1997, Blumer, 1986).

Mead argues that through language human as distinct from animals are able to

- ✓ Organize and store up a schemata of impressions and understanding of the social and physical world.
- ✓ Transmit same to others who share same language form and,
- ✓ Apply same to new situations, perceptions or symbolic communications received from others and in the process create new forms of understanding of such signals (Blumer, 1986).

This access and ability to choose from a range of available response options developed over time in the mind of the individuals help to liberate them from the determining and constraining forces of nature. With a growing self consciousness, the individual ceases to be a passive subject to the direct impact of external stimuli for he can delay his response to such stimuli, anticipate and weigh their significance and consequences against particular lines of action towards them before making an appropriate choice (Putnam, 2001).

In this sense, the individual becomes an active participant in his social world acting and being acted upon within and towards situations. Through such complex and flexible processes of interaction, social identifies meanings and roles are created, maintained, modified or changed (Layton, 1997). Individuals respond to situations on the basis of how they perceive and define them and these definitions refers to the meanings individuals attach to the ongoing events in which they find themselves. So to arrive at an adequate interpretation of an event, the investigator must understand both the various definitions of the situation by the actors in the event and the ways in which these different intersect with each other resulting in series of negotiations of roles which act in concert to produce the totality of the interactional setting (Dezin, 1986).

However, caution about the individuals all the time awareness of the processes which make up their social interaction, is required the extent of such awareness as pointed out by Blumer is debatable and the social observer is compelled to be alert not only to the overt intentions and understanding of his subjects but also to the outcomes of unexpected and unintended actions within the observed interaction. It is through careful examination of these social dynamics that the "hidden" elements of interactions are exposed and apprehended.

III. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

The basic principles of symbolic interactionism have been enumerated by a number of its adherents (Blumer, 1986, & Merton, 1997,) has summarized seven distinct but interrelated principles of the theory:-

- ✓ Human beings unlike lower animals are endowed with the capacity for thought.
- ✓ The capacity for thought is shaped by social interaction.

- ✓ In social interaction people learn the meanings and the symbol that allow them to exercise their distinctively human capacity for thought.
- ✓ Meanings and symbols allow people to carry on distinctively human action and interaction.
- ✓ People are able to modify or alter the meanings and symbols that they use in action and interaction on the basis of their interpretation of the situation
- ✓ People are able to make these modification and alterations because in part of their ability to interact with themselves which allows them to examine possible course of action, assess their relative advantages and disadvantages and then choose one.
- ✓ The intertwined patterns of action and interaction make up groups and societies.

IV. THE BRIEF HISTORY OF INSURGENT GROUP (BOKO HARAM)

The authors described the Boko Haram as an insurgent group, rebels and anarchists clothed in the robes of religious deceit. Borno State is challenged with high level of insecurity especially in the northern and southern zones of the State, perpetrated by this insurgent group called: The Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunnah lidda Awati Wal-Jihad also known as Boko Haram. This group was founded in 2001 in 'Maiduguri' the capital city of Borno State, by Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf the originator of Boko Haram group (Adamu, 2009). The name Boko Haram is a Hausa statement, which upon translated into English mean "Western education is forbidden. The word "Boko" in Hausa language means western education, and "Haram" is an Arabic language which means "forbidden". Boko Haram group opposes western education and also western culture (Musa, 2011). This is adduced to their wrong indoctrination and belief. The Boko Haram group wants the Sharia Law to be applied all over the country and this will be difficult for the government of Nigeria to accept. They vowed that they would rather have a separate Islamic state carved out of Nigeria where they can practice their religion unhindered. In 2009, they started attacking police station and burning of school in Borno State (NTA, 2009).

The Federal Government of Nigeria saw these demands as unacceptable and as traits to national stability in the country; the authority quickly deployed the Nigerian Police to the trouble area (NTA, 2009) Certainly, in an attempt to dislodge the group of its remote settlement, the leader of the Boko Haram group was arrested and later passes away in the detention in 2009.

Adeyemi (2014) stated that from that 2009 year, and following the assumption of a new leader, the insurgent group has continue to unleashed violence and began what can best be described as the "soft target" killing un armed patriotic civilian population of Borno states, forcefully abduction of school girls and women, sporadic shooting and bombings of public places (NTA, 2009).

V. EFFECTS OF BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY ON BASIC EDUCATION

The insurgency in the north-eastern region in general has a serious impact on the education of children as a vulnerable group. The innocent children are made to pay the ultimate price for a war that is not of their making and miss the beauty of childhood as some of them now grow up among families and communities torn apart by insurgency. Many children from the region are separated from their families and loved ones, left to face the harsh effects of insecurity, hunger and disease as refugees or internally displaced persons. According to Kudirat Initiative for Democracy (KIND, 2014), over 300 schools have been burnt and closed, several students and teachers killed and hundreds of girls abducted. Recent studies (Abdulrasheed, and Adaobi,) on the effects of the insurgency on basic education in most of the affected states in north-eastern Nigeria, reveal a very terrible state of insecurity. The studies show that:

- ✓ The insurgency has affected children's basic education through mindless attacks on their schools.
- ✓ Frequent abduction of students in their schools and occasional kidnapping of teachers on their ways to school has drastically reduced their attendance in schools.
- ✓ Most teachers and school heads in the region are among the internally displaced persons.
- ✓ Female teachers and schoolgirls were traumatized and afraid of going to school on fear of attacks from the insurgent group.
- ✓ Kidnapped 110 schoolgirls from the Government Technical Girls College in Dapchi.
- ✓ Education planners and inspectors of basic and primary education programmes cannot conduct periodic check on schools as most education officers in the region are currently out of their states. The resultant effect of this state of affairs in the area is the closure of schools. This has further exacerbated the previous poor rating of the region in terms of access to education. National Population Commission (2014) documented that the Yobe state rates among the lowest on almost all the formal education indicators. Its rates of attendance, from pre-primary school to junior secondary school (JSS), are very low; female children primary completion and literacy rates are also much lower than the national average (Musa, 2011). According to Abdulrasheed (2015), existing evidence revealed that 70% of the Yobe State citizen are illiterates. Insecurity has drastically reduced school enrolment more than any other region in the country. Teachers and other stakeholders found it difficult to persuade parents to allow their children to stay in school. Children who go to school now live in perpetual fears while a good number of them drop out of school. Since the beginning of 2012, about seventy thousand children have been forced out of schools across communities in Yobe (Adamu, 2015) and many teachers have escaped to other states for safety. The net effect of the foregoing is that numerous children of school age currently have no access to education in parts of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states where schools have been closed forte util security reasons. In the affected areas

where schools still function, children and teachers are often afraid to attend classes. In few schools where there are pupils and teachers, it has been reported that such schools are often overcrowded, understaffed and have insufficient teaching materials; and that because of the violence, many parents are unwilling to enroll their children or are withdrawing those already in schools. With the insurgents kidnapping school children so that they can be used as human shields and ready tools for suicide bombing, children in the area might be educationally handicapped in contributing their maximum quota to the nation's development (Adamu, 2015).

VI. SOME METHODS ADOPTED BY GOVERNMENT TO ERADICATE BOKO HARAM

The followings are some of the methods adopted by the government in order to address the problems of Boko Haram in North-East Nigerian so as peace rein in the region as well all avenues of meaningful development will pave its way for peaceful Nigeria.

- ✓ Effort of Creating Ministry of North-East Affairs just like the Ministry of Niger-Delta to help address the numerous challenges in the north, including the problems of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and extremisms. This establishment would be one way of winning the hearts and minds of the locals and cooling local grievances on which Boko Haram feeds.
- ✓ Exploring the option of offering amnesty to the more moderate members of the sects while sidelining the hardliners and finding means to effectively neutralize them. And in the other hand negotiating with the sect, keep the dialogue option open to actively end the conflict through dialogue.
- ✓ Boarder Control, the tight seal instituted across all border crossing. This limit the sect's access to training, funds, men and arms from collaborators
- ✓ Unsettlement of the command structure of the sect, the government continue harassment of the group on every side and keep them on the run and to target the leaders of the group and make it difficult for them to coordinate with one another. It maintain a stranglehold on the organisation and prevent it from having access to easy finding. And it increase exponentially the costs to the group organizing attacks.
- ✓ Citizen participation, the government cannot be everywhere but the people are however everywhere. The government empowered its people and enable them protect themselves through the establishment of Vigilante Groups who will provide surveillance and protection for their respective communities e.g "Kato da Gora".
- ✓ The presence of Non-Governmental Organisations in region to provide relief materials to the victims and finding means to alleviate their suffering as well following them to IDPs camps to provide necessity of life in order to adjust to the changing environment.
- ✓ Purchased of some sophisticated weapons and fighter jets to overcome insecurity nationwide and of recent the

present administration launched 3 helicopters to tackle insurgency in the Nation

All the processes mentioned above were adopted by the government in order to address the problems of Boko Haram but all the efforts abortive, the sect continue to carry out its activities even in more strategic ways but with symbolic Interactionism it is expected more to be reduced drastically.

VII. SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM AND EFFECT OF BOKO HARAM ON UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION

Symbolic Interactionists base their theoretical perspective on the image of humans; humans are pragmatic actors who continually must adjust their behavior to the actions of other actors. We can adjust to these actions only because we are able to interpret them i.e. to denote them symbolically and treat the actions and those who perform them as symbolic objects. This process of adjustment is aided by our ability to imaginatively rehearse alternative lines of action before we act. The process is further aided by our ability to think about and to react to our own actions and even ourselves as symbolic objects. Thus the interactionists theorist see humans as active, creative participants who construct their social world not as passive conforming objects of socialization.

As it is regarded that symbolic interactionism paradigm is like lense in a pair of eyeglass and it is better way of understanding or viewing reality. It is also considered as a frame of reference to better understand how individuals interact with one another to create symbolic worlds and in turn how these worlds shape individual behaviours. Therefore with symbolic interactionism meaningful and educative drama may be organized in local language to be broadcast in television and radio stations expressing vividly how good citizen interact and behave with family members, community and the society in general, having good interaction with the members of the society will serve as a good symbol of correcting negative attitudes among the youths as well moulding and grooming the attitudes of young one to exhibit acceptable norms and values in the society with these good social order and interaction among the members will establish to enhance the progress and development of the society.

Moreover, establishing acceptable norms and values in the society will also help our young ones to manage and protect social infrastructure/amenities provided to the community by the government and other bodies, as well the youth will not allow any other person to vandalize the properties, this will give room for adequate utilization of facilities available. In the other hand managing and safeguarding the facilities appropriately will develop the society and the nation at large. It may also encourage the government and other agencies to provide more meaningful projects to the society, it will serve as a reference to neighbouring communities to apply same process to maintain the facilities provided.

Good religious sermons will also be broadcasted through television and radio stations to conquered the mind of the youth from engaging in any act of extremism belief of bombing and killing innocent brothers and sisters in the

society and in place good religious belief should be maintained in order to live peacefully as brothers and sisters in the society.

Poster and bill board carrying good act/way of behaviours among the members of the society to be displayed in the nook and corners of the towns, it will enable the members of the society to interact and learn from these posters, peaceful co-existence will be maintained the society will progress socially, politically and economically.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Insurgency has displaced over one hundred thousand people in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa (NEMA, 2015). It also becomes a threat to the entire north eastern region of Nigeria. Their activities have crippled the socio-economic activities between Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger Republic and Republic of Chad (Olowoselu, Onuselogu and Bello, 2014). Many Nigerian citizens are currently internally displaced in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States (NCRM, 2015). The insurgency in the States have slow down the nation abilities of achieving the Millennium Development Goals project (MDG'S), Education For All (EFA), and as well as Nigeria Vision 2020 programs. The frequent insurgent attacks have negative impact on socio-cultural values of the people in the States and wellbeing of other Nigerians (Olowoselu, Onuselogu and Bello, 2014). Presently, economic activity is low in the states, as foreign expatriate are relocating to other states in Nigeria due to the increasing security crisis. With the mindless bombings perpetrated by the insurgent, the researchers observed that most schools have been closed in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States.

Evidently, the current joint approaches of Nigerian government and African Union to end the insurgency have recorded tremendous success in the State. But we are also concluding that, the United Nation (UN) should aid Nigerian government and African Union effort, to put an end to insurgency in Nigeria.

IX. RECOMMENDATION

- The followings are recommendations of the paper:-
- ✓ Government should reduce the level of unemployment thereby introducing ways of engaging youth ones to work for sustainable life
 - ✓ Government through Small and Medium Enterprise Agency should provide loan to the people in order to established private business to reduce over dependency on government
 - ✓ overnment should ensure free and compulsory education is maintained at all level in the North-East states this enable our citizen to have functional education
 - ✓ Government should introduce scholarship to all drop outs both male and female to enable them go back to schools for completion
 - ✓ Schools should include and emphasis on Entrepreneur Education to enable youth one engage or establish business after schools.

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