Examining The Nexus Between Illiteracy And Terrorism In Nigeria: Borno State North-Eastern, Nigeria In Perspective

Orkar, Oryina Michael-David (Ph.D)

Strategy and Governance Programme, Institute of Food Security Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi

Shaminja, Tersoo Solomon (M.Sc.)

Department of Sociology, Benue State University, Makurdi, Benue State

Tyungu, Gabriel Tyolumun (Ph.D)

Department of Education Foundations and General Studies, Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi

Abstract: Conflicts and security threats have taking up the Nigerian space in the recent past. Terrorism in particular has become a concern globally and with specific reference to Nigeria, the terror acts continue to bite harder on Nigerians destroying and causing irreversible damages to lives, property and the nation at large. This study which has Borno State North-Eastern Nigeria as its main area of study tries to find out the link between illiteracy and terrorism. Using primary data, the study tries to find out whether there is an existing relationship between illiteracy and terrorism in Nigeria and whether illiteracy has influenced the existence of terrorism in Nigeria and affirmed that there positive relationship between illiteracy and terrorism. Among other recommendations, the study recommends the scrapping of Almajeri System in the North as well as a self value drive with value re-orientation and the declaration of a state of emergency on illiteracy and education in the Northern part of Nigeria.

Keywords: Illiteracy, Terrorism, Education, North East, Poverty, Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

Gaining political independence in 1960, Nigeria regarded as the largest black population in the world serves the big brother role in the West African sub-region. Nigeria is blessed with abundant human and natural resources which includes oil in large quantity. Oil which would have put Nigeria on a positive pedestal has promoted social maladies such as greed, selfishness, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and sorts of criminalities in Nigeria thereby causing an uneasy tension among citizens in various localities. Nigeria is one of the countries in Saharan Africa with hugely vast population with higher illiteracy rates. This why Osuagwu, (2011) posits that illiteracy remained on the rise in Nigeria especially in Northern part of the country as 45 per cent of Nigerians do not have access to basic education, and out of these, youths are the most affected while 5.5 Million almajeris do not have access to primary education. The almajeri system of education is found mainly in the northern states of Nigeria and has not either help in the campaign against illiteracy in the country. When citizens are literate they are an asset to any nation since they have means of contributing positively to the socio-political economy, creating employment and eventually reducing poverty and crimes for a stable as well as harmonious societal co-existence and the vice versa.

Terrorism on one hand has been one of the disturbing crimes posing national security threats in contemporary Nigerian society. For instance, in the past decade; has continued to experience terrorism which has been on the rise with its several implications on national development. A major negative impact of illiteracy is that it makes the youth have low self-esteem further making them vulnerable to negative vices. The North East region made up of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe States are among the lowest in attendance from pre-primary to junior secondary school as well as general literacy rates are much lower than the national

average (NPC, 2016). The early membership of the Boko Haram terrorist group which has its roots from Borno State is from North East which largely consists of impoverished Northern Islamic students (Almajeri) and clerics (Serge and Johnson, 2015).

Here lies the importance of this research study. It is against this backdrop that this research study sets out as its objectives to determine whether illiteracy has a correlation to the emergence and flourishing of terrorism in Nigeria and to establish the nexus between illiteracy and terrorism in Nigeria.

A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

✓ Has illiteracy influenced existence of terrorism in Nigeria?
✓ Is there any nexus between illiteracy and terrorism in Nigeria?

B. RESEARCH PROPOSITION

H_o1: There no significant relationship between illiteracy and terrorism in Northern Nigeria.

C. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

a. ILLITERACY

Illiteracy is the inability of an individual to read or write and change behaviour to conform to modern norms of society or the inability of an individual to reason or act civilly and meeting with the societal values of his age while literacy is the acquisition of basic and functional education (Akpan, 2015). It is the power for development as it liberates the mind and prepares the mind and the individual for worthwhile living. It is a tool that prepares manpower to meet the requirements for modern world (Akpan, 2015). To Akinwade, (2004) illiteracy is one of the factors that lead to poverty. The level to which citizens of a country are literate determines the level of development as all members of any given society have the right to literacy (Akinwade, 2004). Furthermore, Adedeji and Bamidele (2003) note that if majority of a population are literate and educated, they would be quicker economic growth since the human capital resource will be larger. Also, Kolawale and Synder (2008) note that Nigeria's low literacy rate is responsible for a lot of problems confronting the Nigerian state, since the majority of the citizens are unable to access literacy and acquire the necessary skills that will help tackle socio-economic problems facing the country. Illiteracy therefore, has been one of the social problems inhibiting Nigeria's development for decades and has remained a manipulating tool for the ruling class in achieving their selfish purposes at the detriment of the society in general.

b. TERRORISM

Terrorism is a calculated use of violence and non violence or threat or both to intimidate, to frighten and oppress people into submission usually for the purposes of achieving certain goals (Bosimo, 2010). Put differently, terrorism is the use of force and violence against the people and the destruction of properties with an intention to coerce or colonize the society (Awodola and Oboshi, 2015). To Mindani, (2004); terrorism is a premeditated politically motivated violence against non-combatants targets by sub-nationals or clandestine agents usually intended to influence an audience.

The United Nations (U.N.) General Assembly sees terrorism as criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke terror in the general public space. It may be a group of persons or particular persons for purposes that are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whether the considerations, political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them (U.N. 1994), while the United Nations Security Resolution (2004) defines terrorism as criminal acts, perpetrated against civilians committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury or taking of hostages with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing an act.

Terrorism is a calculated act planned to cause fear on either a selected people or a general people with the aim of passing a message, achieving a cause or causing destruction for or against a specific reason which may either be defined or undefined. It has certain characteristics which are all captured in the several definitions. Terrorism is planned, it bloody, it is specifically targeted and it is done for a reason. Terrorism remains one of contemporary Nigeria's problems which have aggravated the general state of insecurity in the country.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. STUDY AREA

The research study was carried out in Maiduguri, capital of Borno State, North East Nigeria. Terrorism in Nigeria has its roots in Maiduguri as a lot of destruction by terrorist started there. Borno State is located latitude 11.833333, and longitude 13.150000 with coordinates of 11°.49' 59.9988" N and 13°9'0.0000" E. The state has an estimated population size of 5,925,668 and has a total area of 92.898 Km^2 (35.868sqm). The stated was created on February 3rd 1976 share boundary with Niger Republic to the North, Republic of Chad to the North East and Cameroon to the East, to the South and West it borders the Nigerian states of Adamawa, Gombe and Yobe (Source). The state has been suffering from endemic illiteracy and terrorism over time.

B. SAMPLE DETERMINATION

The sample size determination was calculated with a confidence level of 96%. The statistical formula used to determine the sample size of the population of the study was Taro Yamane. This formula is appropriate since the population of the study area is known.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;
n = sample size

N= total population

e= acceptable error link or margin error

Thus;

n = 5,925,668

e= 4% = 0.04

$(e)^2$ = 0.0016

n= $5,925,668 \dfrac{5,925,668}{1+5,925,668 \,(0.0016)}$

n= $\dfrac{5,925,668}{1+15425.0608}$

n= $\dfrac{5,925,668}{1+15425.0608}$

n= ∴ = 384

n= 384

The sample size for the study was rounded to 384 thereby having a rounded figure of 128 questionnaires per each zone in Borno State for equal representation.

C. DATA COLLECTION

The research study employed survey research design. The design was very appropriate since it is a very suitable method of obtaining information from respondents across several divides. Data was collected through both random and purposeful sampling. Respondents comprised of academics, security personnel, civil servants, businessmen and farmers inhabitants of Borno State.

D. INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

The instrument for collection of data for this research paper was the questionnaire.

E. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Simple percentages were used to answer the research questions and to confirm or disapprove the research proposition.

F. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Sex	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Male	283	73.7
Female	101	26.3
Total	**384**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 1: showing Gender Distribution of Respondents

Table 1 reveals the gender distribution of respondents. The analysis shows that 283 of the respondents representing (73.7%) are male and 101 representing (26.3%) are female. This analysis shows the male formed the majority of respondents.

Years	Frequency	Percentages (%)
15-30	68	17.7
30-45	172	44.8
45-55	86	22.4
55-75	58	15.1
75-above	-	-

Total	**384**	**100**

Source: Field Survey 2020

Table 2: showing Age Distribution of Respondents

Table 2 shows the age distribution of respondents. The analysis shows that 68 respondents representing (17.7%) are between the ages of 15-30, 172 respondents representing (44.8%) between the ages of 34-45 years, 86 respondents representing (22.4%) are between the ages of 45-55 and 58 representing (15.1%) are 55-75. However none of the respondents was the age 75 and above. The analysis reveals that respondents between the age brackets of 30-45 formed majority of the respondents.

Status	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Single	128	33.4
Married	188	48.9
Divorced	30	7.8
Others	38	9.9
Total	**342**	**100**

Source: Field Survey 2020

Table 3: Showing Marital Status of Respondents

Table 3 reveals the marital status of the respondents; 128 representing (33.4%) are single, 188 representing (48.9%) are married, 30 representing (7.8%) are divorced while 38 representing 9.9 per cent did not clearly state their marital status hence, reflecting in others category. This thereby shows that majority of the respondents are married.

Occupation	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Civil Servant	114	29.9
Security Personnel	108	28.1
Academics	86	22.4
Business men	28	7.3
Farmers	48	12.5
Total	342	100

Source: Field Survey 2020

Table 4: Showing Occupation Distribution of Respondents

Table 4 showing occupational distribution of respondents shows that 114 representing (29.9%) of the respondents are civil servants, 108 representing 28.1 are security personnel, 86 representing 22.4% are academics, 28 are business men with (7.3%), 48 representing (12.5%) are farmers. From the analysis most of the respondents are civil servants.

Qualification	Frequency	Percentages (%)
GCE/WAEC/NECO	194	50.5
OND/NCE	92	23.9
HND/DEGREE	80	20.8
MSC/MED	10	2.6
PhD Above	8	2.0
TOTAL	**342**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 5: showing Educational Qualification of Respondents

The educational qualification distribution of respondents shows that 194 representing (50.5%) of the respondents hold GCE, WAEC and NECO, 92 representing (23.9%) are OND and NCE holders, 80 representing (20.8%) either have a HND or Degree, 10 representing (2.6%) either have an M.Sc/MED degree while 8 representing (2.0%) have PhD. The above analysis reveals that majority of the respondents either have GCE, WAEC or NECO as their qualifications.

PREPOSITION: Illiteracy could be responsible for the existence of terrorism in Nigeria.

ANSWERING RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

Illiteracy is the Cause of Terrorism in Nigeria

Responses	Frequency	Percentages (%)
S A	132	34.4
A	193	50.3
D	37	9.6
SD	22	5.7
Total	**384**	**100**

Source: Field Survey 2020

Table 6: showing whether illiteracy is the cause of terrorism in Nigeria

Table 6 reveals that out of 384 respondents that answered the item 132 representing (34.4%) strongly agree that illiteracy has a crucial role in the existence of terrorism in Nigeria, while 193 representing (50.3%) also agree that illiteracy has a crucial role to play in the existence of terrorism in Nigeria. The 37 respondents representing (9.6%) disagree and 22 representing (5.7%) strongly disagree that illiteracy has a crucial role to play in the existence of terrorism in Nigeria. This therefore means that illiteracy has a crucial role to play in the existence of terrorism in Nigeria.

The result of this research study goes in line with the findings of Sergie and Johnson (2015) who observed that the early membership of the Boko Haram terrorist group consists largely of impoverished northern illiterates who are under Moslem clerics, the leadership of the terrorist organization capitalized on their vulnerability and ignorance to recruit them. Dearn, (2011) agrees with this results as he reports that illiteracy has a crucial role to play in the emergence of terrorism in Nigeria when he observed that the founder of the terrorist group Boko Haram used the advantage of the uneducated Moslem sect in Borno known as Jama' atizalatil BiawaIqamatos Sunmah to recruit members into the terrorist group. Thurstson (2013) in his study notes that the violent terrorist group operating in northern Nigeria drew most of its recruits from the Almajiri-ajeri system in the Northern part of Nigeria has made the vicious membership mustering the Boko Haram terrorist group simple.

Answering Research Question Two is there a Nexus between illiteracy and Terrorism in Nigeria

Responses	Frequency	Percentages (%)
S A	160	46.78
A	125	36.54
D	35	10.23
SD	22	6.43
Total	**342**	**100**

Source: Field Survey 2020

Table 7: showing Relationship between Illiteracy and Terrorism in Nigeria

Table 7 reveals that out of 342 respondents that answered the item majority of 160 representing (46.78) percent strongly agree that there is an existing relationship between illiteracy and terrorism in Nigeria, while 125 representing (36.54%) also agree that there is an existing relationship between illiteracy and terrorism in Nigeria. The 35 respondents representing (10.23%) disagree that there is an existing relationship between illiteracy and terrorism in Nigeria. 22 respondents representing 6.43 percent strongly disagree that there is an existing relationship between illiteracy and terrorism in Nigeria. This thereby, implies that there is a nexus between illiteracy and terrorism in Nigeria.

This result goes with the research findings of (Okobia 2002) who observes that there is an existing nexus between illiteracy and terrorism in Nigeria. He reports that in North Eastern Nigeria Borno and Yobe especially are backward in education with the highest level of illiterates, as a large number of children between the ages of 6-11 years and 12-16 years in school attendance in primary and secondary schools respectively are low as quaranic education is preferred to western education as quranic education becomes a way of life breeding drop outs increasing the rate of illiterates, who don't know the left from right and can easily be recruited into terrorist groups. Okonkwo (2017) agrees with this as he reports that there is an existing relationship between illiteracy and terrorism in Nigeria when he notes that the process of tutoring almajiris is very harsh, as they are lashed and whipped at the smallest mistake with herculean jobs to follow making them very harsh to society, they are made to believe that western education is sinful, they are also taught resentment and antagonism to non-believers, Christians and westerners. They graduate from the quranic schools too old for normal jobs thereby looking at everyone with suspicion, bitterness and mistrust and are thereby called to serve as terrorist. Also, James (2013) notes that with over 10 million uneducated youths in Northern Nigeria they is a high level tendency for them to be used as instruments of violent extremism and ethno-religious conflicts like the Boko Haram sect, this thereby shows a strong nexus between illiteracy and terrorism.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper set out to study whether illiteracy is one of the factors responsible for terrorism in Nigeria, and whether there is an existing relationship or nexus between illiteracy and terrorism in Nigeria. The main area of study was Borno state. Findings from the study reveal that there is an existing relationship between illiteracy and terrorism in Nigeria and illiteracy has contributed to terrorism in Nigeria. With observations and results derived from this study the following recommendations are made:

✓ A state of emergency on education and illiteracy needs to be declared in the North Eastern part of Nigeria with a view to taking very serious the threats that illiteracy has caused to the region. This will help in drawings out relevant strategies through educational programmes which should be short term, medium and long term projects with a view to improving the literacy level of the region.

✓ The almajiri system of education should be phased out and replaced with sound and reformative formal education. This needs to be done in phases so the level of resistance can be minimal.

✓ Aggressive re-orientation to the stakeholders including the youth from the North-Eastern region to have value for

themselves/families and embrace western education in order to liberate themselves and their society

✓ Scholarship schemes need to be given to more youths in the Northern region as a way to encouraging/ promoting formal education.

✓ Government and relevant stakeholders should work harder to reduce poverty, inequality and eschew corruption in the region for human capital, infrastructure and over all sustainable development.

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