**Effect of Insecurity on Children’s Education in Offa/Oyun Local Government Areas, Kwara state: Parents’ Perspective**

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**Abstract**

*Insecurity poses a significant threat to national development, and Nigeria has been grappling with various forms of insecurity including Boko Haram Insurgency, kidnapping and banditry. This study investigated the effects of insecurity on children’s education from parents’ perceptive in Offa / Oyun Local Government Areas, Kwara State. A sample random sampling techniques selected 400 parents, and a two-point Likert scale was used to collect data. Frequency and percentage analyses revel a decline in school population deal to child death, drop out, school closure, learning failure, hunger, absenteeism, and discouragement from continuing education. The implications of insecurity include reduced skilled man power, increased illiteracy, and heightened social problems. Recommendation is provided to address these challenges.*

**Keywords:** Insecurity, parents, communities, Nursery and Primary Education, Nigeria.

**Introduction**

Development of any nation is strongly connected to the types of education given to citizens. The education of early years matters most if we want to have future adults who are well behaved and can create free and safe environment. In Nigeria, upbringing of children who will be socially and morally upright should be the goal of everyone in order to have people who work free and safe society. Assa (2020) noted that the height of development of any society or an individual is firmly on the educational process. Education is an important weapon that can be used to equip individual knowledge and skills so as to live successfully in this challenging world. The big question now is which kind of nursery and primary education do we provide for our children in an insecure society.

Before the introduction of western education in Nigeria, the family structure was such that the nursing mother was able to find a grandmother of one relation to keep the baby with while she went to perform basic domestic chores. As result of modern education and civilization in Nigeria and globally, mothers’ traditional roles as home keepers have changed, many nursing mother are working in the offices, ministries, industries and so on, so there is the increased necessity to critically consider the need to care for children especially at the Nursery and primary education (Early childhood ) stage.

Many Scholars have discussed early childhood/Primary education importance (Ajayi 2008, AKinrotimi &Olowe 2016, Agbana 2016, AKolawole 2019, & 2020). it is the best period to develop children holistically; intellectually, physically and socially. It is the period when we can help to show their potentials, guiding a child to become useful to develop a society in future, it is significantly help in shaping the life of a child and picturing the types of individuals he /she wants to become in future. The importance of this stage of life development needs attention and it must be handled with cares otherwise, its affects the future of the child and creates great problems to the society. In an attempt to make the child develop the habit of leaving home without creating unpleasant scene every morning when going to school.(National Policy On Education)(2013) stated and among the purpose of Early childhood education that it must “Effect a smooth transition from home to school”.

Peace and tranquility are essential for successful teaching and learning in an educational system. However, millions of school children in Nigeria affected by conflicts that result in insecurity, threatening not only their school attendance but also their lives and properties. Regular school attendance is crucial for education and development in any country. The negative effect of irregular school attendance due to insecurity are profound, as noted by (Patrick (2012). Such a child misses out on active learning experiences, class participation and the opportunity to ask questions, making them more likely to fall behind and drop out of school.

**The Concept of Security Connotes**

Security in simple terms means protection of lives and properties from destruction. According to Onifade, Imphonpi and Uorim (2013) security is the dynamic condition which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and their primary beneficiaries are the citizens. In addition, sharing the view of Abraham Maslow, Oderinde (2020) stated that an insecure person perceived the world as a life threatening jungle, feels unsafe, unhappy, rerouted and pessimistic, show a sign of tension, conclude that the students be neurotic and generally egocentric. One therefore concludes that of students studying in an environment that is characterized by insecurity may suffer socially, mentally and emotionally, negative behaviors and psychosocial adjustment but may also affect academic performance.

There are no agreed definitions of what precisely insecurity is, but there is a general agreement that insecurity is linked to chronic threat of disease, hunger, terrorism and poverty. The united Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines Human insecurity as freedom from fear and want. (Okerie 2011) use Japanese foreign policy gives human insecurity definition to include all the menaces that threaten human survival, daily life and dignity for example, environmental degradation, violations of human rights, translational organized crime in drugs, refugees, poverty anti-personal lead mines and others. Hornby, (2004) defines insecurity as a situation in which a person or people do not feel confident about themselves. We can conclude that insecurity is situation in which people lives and properties can be forcefully destroyed or taken away from them at any time. (Amirize 2009) reported that, the 2014 Global Report on security indicate that Nigeria is in one of the following critical variables; unlawful possession of arms, forgery, receiving stolen properties, false pretense, burglary, theft, Boko Haram, armed robbery, Kidnapping, attempt murder cases, manslaughter, etc.

The activities of the gun trotting Boko Haram sect against education came to limelight following the abduction of 275 student of Government Girls College Chibok, Borno state in 2014. The globally well publicized instance of school kidnapping brought a new perception to Nigeria’s insecurity problems as many schools (primary and secondary) attacks have been recorded in several states of the country afterward: such as Borno, Adamawa, Yoba, Kaduna, Rivers, Lagos and Niger just to mention but few. We also have occasional classes between the Fulani nomads and perennial crop farmers in the middle belts states of Benue, Kwara, Kogi; cases of kidnapping of teachers and student in some states in Nigeria. Bombs have been brazenly detonated school assemblies leaving dozens dead in Yobe school attack while building burnt down in the town of Kuriga, Kaduna state on march 7th , 2024 about 287 school children and members of staff were abducted. Kidnapping and bandit today have no respect for the house of God; they bomb and Kidnap people in the church, the recent St France Catholic church Owo in Ondo state on 5th of June, 2022. Where the blood of 38 innocent Worshippers were murdered in cold blood was splashed on the ground around the whole church and many were injured, materials are intentionally burnt up. Some believe that they are politically motivated, other believe that they are the activities of religion fanatic while some other believe that these experiences are Nigeria’s own share of the world insecurity problems. In light of the above, Adegoroye (2021) Lamented that the recent massive pernicious business of kidnapping of students especially in the north. About 1,500 students in Borno, Kaduna, Zamfara, Yobe, Kastina and Niger state especially girls have been abducted at various time between 2014-2023 by gunmen, kidnappers etc. in exchange of ransom.

Religion – related conflicts is another serious issue that have effects on children’s education. In addition to Boko Insurgency, religion-related conflicts have also affected education in kwara state for instance the kwara state Government’s approval of students wearing Hijab in Christian Mission school such as Oyun Baptist High School in Ijagbo lead to widespread violence and destruction of children’s education. The crisis led to the closure of the school for 3 months (3rd of February 2022 - 1st June 2022), this does not only affect the school alone but all the primary and secondary school in the areas (Punch newspaper, 1st June 2022) This conflict resulted in trauma for the affected student and highlight the complex relationship between religion and education in the area. This local context underscores the important of considering the specific cultural and religious dynamics in understanding the impact of insecurity of children’s education in Kwara state. In insecure school environments the psychological problems of the students are never met or carelessly handled. According to Ojukwu and Nwanna(2015) insecure school environment, including the dilapidated conditions and teacher’s nature attitude to condone and accept the emotional needs of students, which will lead to undue influences and clashes of a local communities interfering the school business. They went further that, school environment characterized by insecurity, lateness is the norms in school and students are allowed to freely use handset and phones. Other instances of insecurity of the school environment include formative female staffs and students complain of being raped or impregnated leading to school dropout. Ghazi, Shahzada, Traiq Khan (2013) noted that, parents complain that their children are bullied and injured and the classroom are overcrowded, poorly ventilated and lit. Some researcher’s (Ojukwu & Nwanma 2015, Ojokwu & Onuoha 2016) respectively investigated the influence of insecurity of school environment on the student behavior and psychosocial adjustments in Abia and Imo states. An insecure school environment according to Akintude and Musa (2016) affects the learning of children. Situation of insecurity trigger traumatic disorder and toxic stress that effect learning generally. General school attendance is equally affected. In some extreme cases, insecurity has led to the closure of school. Lehr (2014) opines that, the nobles goals of education can never be achieved in vacuum. They will be achieved in a conducive and peaceful school environment. If there is a feeling of insecurity within and outside the school environment, both the students and teachers are likely to be deterred and this may inhibit the academic performance of the students (pupils).

One of the challenges confronting children where there is security problem is hunger. Their parents or the bread winners who are expected to work daily to bring food for the family are either unable to go to work due to the insecurity situation or at times, sustain serious injury from attack or killed.

According to Shankoff, Phillps, and council (2000), social security has detrimental impact on children’s social and emotional development. Research in early childhood education has establish that social insecurity has a negative influence on this aid group. Negative early experiences can harm children’s mental health and have a lasting impact on their cognitive, behavioural, social and emotional development. Furthermore, social insecurity can lead to parental impoverishment, resulting in a high rate of school dropout and bleak economic and social prospects, including mobility, hopelessness, hunger, and food insecurity. These factors have a long lasting impact on children’s learning. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the effect and implications of insecurity on children’s education and development. The findings of this study will provide valuable insight on parent perception on effect and implication of insecurity on Nursery and primary education in Offa/ Oyun Local Government Areas, Kwara and Nigeria as a whole, ultimately informing potential solutions.

**Statement of the Problem**

Nigeria has faced persistent insecurity challenges, resulting in the destruction of lives and property worth billions of naira. Consequently, the education sectors have been affected, with school children, structures, resources and facilities suffering the consequences . Although the North – Eastern region has borne the brunt of these challenges, other parts of the country, including the study area, have not been spared. The study area, comprising Offa and Oyun Local Government Areas, has specifically been affected by:

I. The long- standing boundary dispute between Offa and Erin-ile leading to violent clashes and loss of property. According to Oladimeji, Ayuba and Ayodele (2019) occurs in 1971, 1975, 1997, 2008 and January 2013 which can be tagged “mega dispute” of all because it claimed many lives and properties.

II. Religious conflicts, notably the controversy over Hijab wearing in Christian Mission schools, resulting in school closures and disrupted education.

These insecurity challenges have far-reaching implications for Nigeria’s future, negatively impacting children’s education and their potential contributions to national development. This study aims to investigate effects of insecurity on children’s education in the study area and explore parents’ perception on the matter

**Scope of the study**

Offa and Oyun Local Government Areas have experienced various form of insecurity in recent years, including land/boundary disputes, religious conflicts, and communal crises. These conflicts have led to disruptions in children’s access to education, displacement ,fear, and trauma .This study aims to provide insights into the effects of insecurity on children’s education and inform strategies for promoting education in conflict affected areas.

**Significance of the study**

The study would provide valuable insight into the effect of insecurity on children’s education which could inform policies and program designed to support children’s educational needs in Nigeria. Also, the findings could be used to inform intervention policies and helping to improve educational outcomes for children in Nigeria and Africa at large. Again, the study would help raise awareness of the impact of insecurity on children’s education, which could encourage more people action to improve the situation thereby having positive impact on the future of Nigeria children and Nigerian.

**Research questions**

1. What are effects of insecurity on Nursery and Primary Educations in Offa/Oyun Local Government Areas, Kwara State?

2. What is the implication of the effects of insecurity on the future of Offa/Oyun Local Government Areas societies?

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

This study employed a descriptive survey design, utilizing questionnaire to collect data from respondent. The aim of descriptive survey is to gather data from a representative sample of the population, describe specific features of the sample, and generalize the findings to the entire population. In this study the researcher collected data from a large sample of parents’ in Offa/Oyun Local Government Areas of Kwara state to examine effect of insecurity on children’s education, making the descriptive survey design an appropriate choice.

**Population of the study**

The targeted population are all the parents and communities in Offa and Oyun local government areas.

**Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Ten communities were selected for this study in Offa and Oyun Government Areas of Kwara state Nigeria.

Forty (40) parents each were selected as a sample from each of the ten communities, making a total of 400 parents.

**Data Collection Method**

The questionnaire tagged “ Effects of Insecurity on Children Education(EICE)” was drawn . it has three sections. Section A, seeks to obtain responses on the personal information about the respondents. Section B, was directed at obtaining response on the effects of insecurity on nursery and primary education, Section C was directed at obtaining response on the implications on the two local government areas and nation insecurity on the Nigeria society.

**Data Analysis Method**

The data collected was analyzed using the Likert scale and simple percentage analysis. The responses to the questionnaire were scored using the Likert scale with ‘’Agree’’ responses assigned a value of 1 and ‘’Disagree’’ responses assigned a value of 0. The percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed with each statement was calculated to determine the level of agreement or disagreement.

**Validity and Reliability**

Copies of the questionnaire (TEICE) were given to three experts at Kwara State College of Education Oro to validate the instrument. The expert confirmed the appropriateness, clarity and comprehensiveness of the item in the questionnaire. The face and content validity of the instrument were strengthened by the constructive criticism and opinion of expert on items of the questionnaire. To establish the reliability of (TEICE) test/retest method was adopted. than the critical value (1.98) the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no difference in the attitude of married female students towards breastfeeding based on religion.

**Result and Discussion**

The research questions raised in the study were analyzed using the frequency and percentages distributions. The analyses were conducted according to the questionnaire items, as presented below

**Table 1: frequency distribution respondent according to age group**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Age**  | **No of respondent**  | **Percentage** |
| 16-35  | 126 | 31.55 |
| 35-50 | 146 | 36.5 |
| 51 above  | 128 | 32 |
| Total  | 400 | 100%  |

Four hundred (400) questionnaire was distributed to respondents. Of this 126(31.5%) were ages 18-35 while 146 (36.5%) were within ages 35-50 and 128 (32%) were within the ranges of 51 above.

**Table 2: Frequency Distribution Of Respondent According To Educational Qualification**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender**  | **No of respondent**  | **Percentage** |
| Male | 212 | 53 |
| Female | 188 | 47 |
| Total | 400 | 100% |

Table 2 showed that 212 (53%) of the respondents are male while 188(47%) are female

**Table 3: Frequency Distribution Of Respondent According To Educational Qualification**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Qualification**  | **No of respondent**  | **Percentage**  |
| Illiterates  | 41 | 10.25 |
| Non graduate  | 191 | 47.75 |
| Graduates | 168 | 42 |
| Total  | 400 | 100% |

Table 3: showed that 42 (10%) of the respondents were illiterate parent. Ome hundred and ninety one 191(47%) of them were illiterate but non graduates while 168 (42%) were graduate

**Result on the effect of insecurity in Nursery and primary education**

**Table 4: Response Effects of Insecurity on Nursery and Primary Education** **in Offa/Oyun Local Government Areas, Kwara State.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N**  | **Statement** | **Agreed** | **%** | **Disagreed**  | **%** |
| 1 | Death children | 384 | 69% | 16 | 4% |
| 2 | Closure of school | 279 | 69.75% | 121 | 30.25% |
| 3 | Drop out of school, child labor  | 290 | 72.5%  | 110 | 27.5% |
| 4 | High failure rate | 301 | 72.25% | 99 | 24.75% |

Table 4 show that 96% of the respondents agreed that insecurity has led to the death of many children in Nigeria while 4% of them disagreed with the statement. Also, about 70% percent of the respondents agreed that many schools were closed as a result of insecurity has caused many children to drop out of school while 27.5 disagreed. Again 75% of the respondents agreed that insecurity has the effect of causing high failure rate in respondents. While 25% disagreed. About 62% of the respondent agreed that insecurity has the effect of hunger on the school children while 38% disagreed to the statement. About 57% of the respondents agreed that insecurity is source of discouragement from schooling while 43% disagreed. Seventy two percent (72%) agreed that insecurity cause destruction to school buildings and other properties while 28% disagreed. Again 61% of the respondents agreed that internal insecurity can lead a child to an unfulfilled life while 39% disagreed.

**Table5:- Respondents on the implication of insecurity on Nursery and Primary Education in Offa/Oyun Local Government Areas, Kwara State.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Statement**  | **Agreed**  | **%** | **Disagreed**  | **%** |
|  | **Increase in illiteracy level** | **320** | **80%** | **80** | **20%** |
|  | **Increase in dependents** | **202** | **50.5%** | **198** | **49.5%** |
|  | **More social problems such as thuggery, armed robbery, harlotry etc.** | **310** | **77.5%** | **90** | **22.5%** |
|  | **Less skilled manpower development** | **342** | **85.5%** | **58** | **14.5%** |
|  | **Less national productivity** | **244** | **61%**  | **156** | **39%** |
|  | **Less national development** | **198** | **49.5%**  | **202** | **50.5%** |

Table 5 show that 320 (80%) of the respondents agreed that insecurity would increase the level of illiteracy while 80% (20%) disagreed with the statement. Also, 202 (50.5%) of the respondents agreed that insecurity will increase the dependency ratio while 198 (49.5) of them disagreed with the statement. In whether insecurity could lead to increase social problems, 310 (77.5%) agreed while 90 (22.5%) disagreed with statement. On the questionnaire item that insecurity cloud led to reduced skilled manpower development, 343 (85.5%) agreed to this while 58 (14.5%) disagreed with this statement. Also, 244 (61%) agreed that insecurity could lead to a decline in the national productivity of a country while 156 (39%) disagreed with the statement. Again 198 (49.5%) of the respondents agreed that national insecurity could hinder national development while 202 (50.5%) disagreed with the statement.

***Conclusion and Recommendation***

From the findings of this study, the effects of insecurity on children in Nursery and primary schools include: Death of children, Closure of schools, drop-out of school, child labor, high failure rate, child hunger while learning, while the implication of insecurity on the future of the children and the society include: increase in illiteracy level, dependents, increased social problems, cumulating to less skilled manpower development and less national productivity. The findings did also show that insecurity could lead to less national development in the future.

From the foregoing, of this study, the researchers recommend that all hands must be on deck to ensure that the current insecurity in Nigeria is brought to an end. Our leaders should collaborate and ensure that the groups involved in Nigeria insecurity are pacified. Political office holders should provide employment opportunities for the teaming unemployed youths. Besides, there should be a wider spread of the resources of Nigeria, A situation in which some have more than their fare while the other have none is unacceptable, also efforts should be made by owners of schools as well as stake holders in education to ensure that school environment are fenced and protected to ward off murders from school premises so that students can have a sense of security. Finally, Nigerian are implored to desist from involving in ethnic and religious sentiments in all they do.

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