

Impact of Chibok Girls' Abduction on the Educational Life of Christian Female Students in Secondary School in Southern Borno, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of Chibok girls' abduction on the educational life of Christian female students in secondary school in Southern Borno, Nigeria. The objective of the study was to assess the impact of Chibok girls' abduction on the educational life of Christian female students in secondary school in Southern Borno, Nigeria. The total population comprised of Christian female students in secondary school in Southern Borno, Nigeria made up of one (1) Senatorial District are 16,456. Five hundred and eighty-nine (589) respondents were randomly sampled to represent the total population. Descriptive survey design was used for the study and questionnaire instrument was employed to collect data. The finding of the study reveals a decline in female student enrollment in schools, with many female students in boarding schools either abandoning their education or relocating to other areas within or outside the region. The study recommends that, the government and educational authorities should enhance school security by deploying personnel, installing surveillance systems, and implementing community-based safety initiatives to protect students from threats. Educational stakeholders should offer financial aid, scholarships, and relocation support to ensure safe and stable learning for female students affected by insecurity.

Keywords: Abduction, Education, Christian Female Students

Introduction

Security has emerged as a critical global concern, with nations across all continents grappling with its implications. Insecurity manifests through diverse forms, including terrorism, transnational violence, kidnapping, and socio-religious conflicts, each presenting distinct challenges and contributing to an intricate and interconnected web of global instability. Countries such as North Korea, Israel, Russia, the United States, and South Korea have faced various security challenges over time, resulting in internal unrest, social instability, strained international relations, and substantial economic burdens (Manga, 2019). These pervasive security threats highlight the entrenched and multifaceted nature of global insecurity, with effects extending beyond national borders to shape geopolitical and economic dynamics.

In nations like Afghanistan, Sudan, Kenya, and Nigeria, insurgencies and violent extremism have significantly disrupted societal structures. For example, Afghanistan has endured prolonged instability and humanitarian crises due to decades of conflict. In Nigeria, security concerns have intensified since the transition to democracy in 1999, receiving widespread media coverage. The country faces numerous threats, including communal clashes, ethno-religious violence, terrorism, and civil unrest, which have collectively undermined socio-political and economic stability, disrupted daily life, and hindered development. The media's consistent focus on these issues underscores their severity and complexity, attracting both national and international attention. Several factors contribute to Nigeria's ongoing security challenges. A fragile security infrastructure undermines effective responses to threats, while corruption within government and security agencies exacerbates the problem by impeding reforms and enforcement. Additionally, high unemployment, porous borders enabling illegal activities, widespread poverty, and religious extremism create a web of interconnected challenges that complicate efforts to address insecurity (Ojukwu & Nwanma, 2015; Osaat & Peter, 2021).

The abduction of the Chibok girls has profoundly influenced the educational experiences of Christian female students in secondary schools within Southern Borno, Nigeria, highlighting the interplay of socio-political and security challenges in the region. This tragic event, which took place on April 14, 2014, involved the kidnapping of 276 girls from the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State, by Boko Haram insurgents. Its repercussions extend far beyond the immediate victims, significantly reshaping the educational landscape. The incident underscored the pervasive security crisis in Northern Nigeria, exacerbating preexisting educational difficulties. In the aftermath, heightened fear and uncertainty among students and their families led many parents to withdraw their daughters from school or avoid enrolling them in boarding institutions. This widespread insecurity has contributed to declining school enrollment and attendance rates, particularly for Christian female students in Southern Borno. Already strained by insufficient infrastructure and resources, schools faced additional challenges, including increased security risks and psychological trauma among students (Isaactomason, 2022).

The psychological toll of the abductions has been severe, resulting in higher dropout rates and diminished academic performance. For many students, the emotional impact of such traumatic events has hindered their ability to concentrate on studies, thereby increasing the likelihood of abandoning education altogether. This disruption not only affects short-term academic outcomes but also has enduring consequences, such as reduced access to higher education and limited career opportunities, which perpetuate cycles of poverty and socio-economic instability. The crisis has also imposed practical challenges on education in Southern Borno. School infrastructure has suffered significant destruction, and the displacement of both students and teachers has further weakened the already fragile educational system. Operational schools face persistent difficulties, including security concerns, inadequate facilities, and

resource shortages, which exacerbate the struggles of educators and learners alike. The persistent threat of violence has necessitated enhanced security measures, which, while essential, impose additional financial and logistical burdens on educational institutions (Atabo, 2019).

Southern Borno encompasses nine of the twenty-seven Local Government Areas in Borno State and shares borders with Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. The region is predominantly rural and relies heavily on an agricultural economy, with most residents engaged in farming, herding, and fishing activities. Despite its rural character, Southern Borno features a significant government presence, particularly within Local Government Headquarters. The introduction of Christian missionary activities in the 1920s was instrumental in shaping the educational landscape of the region. Southern Borno's experience underscores the complex relationship between security challenges and educational development. The abduction of the Chibok girls vividly illustrates the detrimental impact of insurgency and violence on educational systems, particularly in areas affected by conflict (Mohammed & Olowosalu, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

Western formal education faced significant delays in many areas of northern Nigeria, with the northeastern region experiencing particularly slow adoption. This lag in educational development was partly due to regional resistance and historical factors that hindered the spread of formal schooling. The arrival of missionaries in the southern Borno region played a pivotal role in altering perceptions about Western education. Their early efforts in the area helped to build trust and demonstrate the value of formal schooling, which gradually influenced local attitudes toward education. As a result of these missionary initiatives, there has been a notable shift in educational practices in southern Borno. Today, it is common for girls in this region to attend school, with many completing their education up to the secondary level. This progress reflects the positive impact of early missionary work on educational acceptance and participation in the area.

The researcher observes that Chibok abduction has led to a marked decline in female student enrollment in secondary schools within Southern Borno. The fear and insecurity resulting from such abductions have discouraged many families from sending their daughters to school, particularly in boarding schools. As a result, many Christian female students have been withdrawn from educational institutions, leading to a significant drop in enrollment rates. This reduction in student numbers directly impacts the educational opportunities available to young girls in the region, exacerbating the existing educational disparities and undermining efforts to promote gender equality in education.

Abduction and Educational Life of Christian Female Students

Abduction in conflict-affected regions, such as Southern Borno, Nigeria, represents a critical threat to the educational prospects of students, especially Christian female students.

The act of abduction disrupts not only the immediate safety of the victims but also has far-reaching consequences for their academic journey and personal development. In areas plagued by such violence, the fear of abduction can lead to a significant decrease in school enrollment and attendance. Parents, deeply concerned for the safety of their children, are often reluctant to send their daughters to school, leading to a drop in the number of students who continue their education (Searcey, 2018). This disruption in education can severely impact the long-term academic and career opportunities of these young individuals, perpetuating cycles of educational disadvantage and economic instability. For Christian female students specifically, the implications of abduction are particularly profound due to the added layers of socio-religious context.

Taylor (2017) opines that in predominantly Muslim regions like Southern Borno, where Christian communities are minorities, the threat of abduction exacerbates existing challenges related to religious and cultural tensions. The trauma associated with abduction often results in psychological distress, including anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which further impedes students' ability to engage effectively in their studies. The resulting emotional and mental health issues can significantly hinder academic performance and personal growth, making it difficult for affected students to recover and thrive in their educational environment. One of the most immediate consequences of abduction is the significant decline in enrollment rates among Christian female students. In regions affected by abductions, such as Southern Borno, families are often deterred from sending their daughters to school due to fears for their safety. The traumatic events surrounding high-profile abductions, like that of the Chibok girls, create an environment where parents prioritize the safety of their children over their education. As a result, many girls are withdrawn from educational institutions, leading to a noticeable drop in the number of female students enrolling in secondary schools.

Uzorma, and Nwanegbo (2014) maintain that the fear and trauma resulting from abductions have a profound impact on the educational trajectory of Christian female students, often leading to increased dropout rates. When students witness or hear about violent abductions, the resulting psychological trauma can be overwhelming. This emotional distress manifests as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), all of which severely impair a student's ability to focus and engage with their academic work. The constant fear of potential abduction, coupled with the pervasive sense of insecurity, creates an environment where students struggle to maintain their educational commitments. As a result, many students choose to leave school prematurely, abandoning their secondary education in favor of perceived safety. This emotional and psychological burden makes it exceedingly difficult for them to concentrate on their studies, leading to higher dropout rates.

The ramifications of this increased dropout rate extend far beyond the individual level, affecting both the students' future opportunities and their broader societal contributions. Educational attainment is closely linked to future career prospects and socio-economic stability. When Christian female students drop out of school, they miss out on crucial academic

and vocational training that could otherwise open doors to better employment opportunities and personal development (Zoe, 2014). This educational disruption not only limits their individual potential but also has broader societal implications. An increased dropout rate among these students can contribute to a cycle of poverty and underdevelopment, diminishing their ability to contribute positively to their communities and society at large. Therefore, addressing the psychological impact of abductions and improving security measures is essential to mitigating dropout rates and ensuring that students can continue their education and build a more secure future.

The psychological trauma experienced by students who have been directly or indirectly affected by abductions is a significant concern. The stress and anxiety caused by the threat of abduction can lead to mental health issues such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and anxiety disorders. These psychological challenges can impede academic performance and hinder overall well-being, making it difficult for affected students to fully engage with their education. Addressing these mental health needs is crucial for supporting students in their recovery and educational pursuits. Abductions not only impact individual students but also disrupt the broader educational environment (Oyewole & Onuoha, 2021). Schools in conflict-affected areas often face operational challenges, including increased security measures, reduced attendance, and a general atmosphere of fear. These disruptions can lead to interruptions in the academic schedule, reduced instructional time, and a decline in the quality of education. The overall learning experience is compromised, affecting both students' academic progress and their overall educational development.

Oriola (2017) states that ensuring the safety of female students in areas prone to abductions is a critical concern. In regions where violence and kidnapping are prevalent, the risk of harm significantly undermines the security of educational environments. This atmosphere of danger often deters students from attending school regularly, as the threat of abduction makes the learning environment unsafe. Boarding schools, which traditionally offer a more secure setting away from home, may become less appealing to families due to heightened security concerns. Consequently, the perceived risks associated with attending such institutions can severely limit access to education for female students, especially in regions where educational resources are already scarce. The repercussions of abductions on educational opportunities extend well beyond immediate safety concerns (Nwanunobi, 2017). As the rate of school dropouts' increases and enrollment numbers decline, fewer girls complete their secondary education. This decline in educational attainment has a cascading effect on their future prospects, including diminished chances for higher education and career advancement. Over time, the restricted access to education can contribute to the perpetuation of poverty and hinder socio-economic mobility. As a result, the long-term impact of reduced educational opportunities can entrench cycles of disadvantage, limiting the potential for these students to achieve economic stability and upward mobility in their adult lives.

The abduction has contributed to increased dropout rates among female students. The trauma and fear associated with the abduction have led many students to abandon their education prematurely. The psychological impact of such events, coupled with the lack of a secure environment, has made it challenging for students to focus on their studies and remain committed to their educational pursuits. This issue is compounded by the inadequate support systems for affected students, who may struggle with trauma and the stress of living in a conflict-affected area. Consequently, many girls who initially started secondary school in Southern Borno are unable to complete their education, which has long-term implications for their future prospects and empowerment. As a result of these backdrops, the study is set to investigate the impact of Chibok girls' abduction on the educational life of Christian female students in secondary school in Southern Borno, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

This study is aimed at examining the impact of Chibok girls' abduction on the educational life of Christian female students in secondary school in Southern Borno, Nigeria.

Research Question

The research question is, what is the impact of Chibok girls' abduction on the educational life of Christian female students in secondary school in Southern Borno, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

The study was guided by the hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between the opinions of teachers and students on the impact of Chibok girls' abduction on the educational life of Christian female students in secondary school in Southern Borno, Nigeria".

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design and the target population are Christian female students in southern Borno state, Nigeria comprises of Southern Senatorial District. Simple random sample population of 589 respondents out of 16,456 made up of teachers and students were used for the study. A structured questionnaire was the instrument employed for data collection. The data analysis was based on the responses from 589 respondents out of the sampled 640 Christian female students, representing (92%) the administered questionnaire that were successfully returned. The respondents were randomly sampled from Southern Senatorial District in the State. The vetted questionnaire was administered by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. The data was analyzed using Version 20 of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The mean scores for the items were based on four-point Likert scale and the midpoint average for decision for items or variables was fixed at 2.50. This implies that, a mean score of 2.50 and above indicates agreement (positive response) with the suggested notion of items while mean score of below

2.50 implies disagreement (negative response). The hypothesis was tested with t-test statistics at 0.05 levels of significance.

Results and Discussions

The results are presented according to the bio-data of the respondents based on status (Teacher and Students), research question and hypothesis. The respondents for this study comprised of 57 teachers and 532 students, which gave the total of 589 respondents.

Table 1: Opinions of the Respondents on educational life of Christian female students in secondary school in Southern Borno, Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	X
1	It has reduced enrolment of female students in schools	314	200	58	17	3.38
2	Many never return to schools to complete their education after Chibok girls' abduction.	211	301	44	33	3.17
3	Most female students do not want to enroll in boarding secondary schools	231	278	64	16	3.23
4	Some female Students got scholarship to study abroad	502	66	19	2	3.81
5	Most female students in boarding schools have either abandoned school or relocate to other places within or outside the zone	414	107	13	55	3.49
6	Some female students have dropped out of school	222	293	50	24	3.21
7	Female students prefer to abandon their studies in school for safety reasons	325	185	27	52	3.33
8	Most girls who started secondary schools in this zone hardly completed their final years	241	268	59	21	3.24
9	Attendance at school is depending on the readiness of the child, and the provision of school materials.	219	270	63	37	3.14
Cumulative						3.33

Decision mean = 2.50

Results in this table shows the mean responses of 3.38, 3.17, 3.23, 3.81, 3.49, 3.21, 3.33, 3.24 and 3.14. The cumulative mean value is 3.33. This value is above the mean value of 2.50. Hence, abduction had impact on the educational life of Christian female students in secondary school in Southern Borno, Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis

The study was guided by the hypothesis which states "There is no significant difference between the opinions of Teachers and students on the impact of Chibok girls' abduction on the educational life of Christian female students in secondary school in Southern Borno, Nigeria".

Table 2: Opinions of Teachers and students on the impact of Chibok girls' abduction on the educational life of Christian female students in secondary school in Southern Borno, Nigeria

S/N	Variables	N	Mean	Std. Devt	Std. Error	Df	t-cal	t-crit	P
1	Teacher	57	3.2036	0.57636	0.02588	587	2.43	1.96	0.002
2	Students	532	2.9778	0.82481	0.03704				

Calculated $p < 0.05$, calculated $t > 1.96$, at df 587

Results of the independent t-test statistics in table 2 reveals that, there is significant difference on the opinions of teachers and students on the impact of Chibok girls' abduction on the educational life of Christian female students in secondary school in Southern Borno, Nigeria. Reason being that, the calculated p-value of 0.002 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance while the t-calculated value 2.43 is higher than 1.96, at $df = 587$. This implies that, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected.

Finding of the Study

The finding of the study reveals a decline in female student enrollment in schools, with many female students in boarding schools either abandoning their education or relocating to other areas within or outside the region.

Discussions of Findings

The main objective of this study was to examine the impact of Chibok girls' abduction on the educational life of Christian female students in secondary school in Southern Borno, Nigeria. From the analysis of the data obtained, the findings of the study reveal a decline in female student enrollment in schools, with many female students in boarding schools either abandoning their education or relocating to other areas within or outside the region. According to Andrew and Etumabo (2016), the decline in female student enrollment, particularly in boarding schools, reflects a significant challenge in ensuring equal access to education. This trend can be attributed to various socio-economic and security-related factors, including concerns over school safety, cultural norms, and financial constraints. In regions experiencing instability, threats such as kidnappings, violence, or harassment disproportionately affect female students, leading parents to withdraw their daughters from school or seek alternative educational opportunities in safer locations. Additionally, economic hardships may force families to prioritize immediate survival over long-term educational investment, especially for girls. Furthermore, Andrew and Etumabo state that the relocation of female students within or outside the region disrupts academic continuity and may result in increased dropout rates, further exacerbating gender disparities in education. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, including policy interventions that enhance school security, provide

financial support for vulnerable students, and promote community awareness on the importance of girls' education.

The finding presented in Table 2 indicate that there is significant difference on the opinions of teachers and students on the impact of Chibok girls' abduction on the educational life of Christian female students in secondary school in Southern Borno, Nigeria. This significant difference in opinions also contrasts with the viewpoint of Okorie (2017), who demonstrated that teachers and students might perceive and respond to the implications of such traumatic events differently. This discrepancy could be rooted in various factors, including differences in empathetic engagement, risk assessment, or personal experiences with trauma, which influence how educators perceive and address the needs of affected students.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, it can be deduced that the decline in female student enrollment, particularly in boarding schools, highlights a pressing challenge in achieving educational equity. The displacement and withdrawal of female students not only disrupt their academic progress but also contribute to long-term gender disparities in education and socio-economic opportunities. Without urgent interventions, this trend could have far-reaching consequences on female empowerment and community development. Therefore, it is crucial for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to implement strategies that enhance school security, provide financial and psychological support to affected students, and promote awareness campaigns emphasizing the importance of girls' education. Addressing these challenges will help create a safer and more inclusive learning environment, ensuring that female students can pursue their education without fear or interruption.

Recommendations

Based on the finding and conclusion of the study, it has been recommended that:

- i. Both federal and state governments as well as educational authorities should enhance school security by deploying personnel, installing surveillance systems, and implementing community-based safety initiatives to protect students from threats.
- ii. Educational stakeholders should offer financial aid, scholarships, and relocation support to ensure safe and stable learning for female students affected by insecurity.

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