



Parents and Teachers' Perceived Effect of Banditry Activities on Pupils Enrollment in Selected Public Primary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the perceived effect of banditry activities on pupils' enrollment in selected public primary schools in Gusau's local government area of Zamfara State, Nigeria. The research addresses the growing concern of banditry activities in the region and its impact on access to education. Banditry activities, characterized by armed attacks, kidnappings, and destruction of property, have caused fear and insecurity among parents and teachers, leading to a decline in pupil enrollment. The study aimed at examining the perceived effects of banditry on enrollment and shed light on the challenges faced by parents and teachers in ensuring access to education for children in the affected areas. A quantitative research method was employed, utilizing a survey questionnaire administered to parents and teachers in the study area. The findings reveal that banditry activities have a negative effect on children's enrollment in public primary schools, with respondents expressing concerns about the safety of their children. The study highlights the need for effective measures to address the security situation and restore confidence in the education system, emphasizing the importance of providing a safe and conducive learning environment for pupils. Policy recommendations to mitigate the impact of banditry activities on education are discussed based on the research findings.

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is impossible to overstate the importance of education for human progress. Education has always been considered a crucial instrument in every human society, enabling individuals to advance more quickly than other species. All sociological, economic, and political systems, among others, are built on the foundation of education. Access to education includes enrollment opportunities, as well as the facilitation of entry and the encouragement of sustained enrollment by learners in appropriate education programs. The concept of access to education reflects the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which asserts that every child has the right to education. Thus, access to education guarantees that everyone entitled to education will receive it. It implies the right, opportunity, or means of making education available within the reach of every citizen of a nation.

Due to widespread displacement and other causes in the impacted neighborhoods, banditry activities have worsened the lack of educational opportunities in the North-West region. In recent years, banditry has alarmingly increased in the northwest states of Zamfara, Kaduna, and Katsina. Villages are terrorized by bandits with impunity. They have relocated to Zamfara state, where they have built fortified enclaves in the countryside and along the borders from which they plan and conduct their operations. These acts of banditry perpetuated by bandits have caused a lot of damage, loss of lives, and property. In line with this, [Chikwuma and Francis \(2014\)](#) claim that in environments with low deterrence, crime thrives. There are several opportunities for criminal activities in the majority of Nigeria's rural towns. These villages are scattered throughout isolated locations with little to no government presence. More significantly, homes are occasionally separated from and dotted with forests. Banditry is conceptually derived from the term "bandit," which refers to an unauthorized armed organization that terrorizes people and takes their possessions. It is synonymous with the formation of gangs that carry out attacks on victims using small and light weapons. In this context, banditry could refer to planned illegal behavior that is executed for one's benefit. Banditry as the activity of stealing cattle and other animals from herders or raiding cattle from their ranches due to the complicated nature of bandits' actions. As a result, they become open targets for banditry. The problem is exacerbated by the lack of efficient community policing structures capable of handling the unique security challenges in the land.

Recently, banditry activities in the northwestern states of Kaduna, Zamfara, and Katsina have reached frightening levels. Armed bandits have allegedly been carrying out deadly attacks in northwest Nigeria for more than four years, mainly in the states of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Niger, and Sokoto. Numerous interrelated reasons, such as cattle rustling, the spread of light and small arms, illegally conducted artisanal mining, youth unemployment, poverty, and inequality, all contribute to the occurrence of such attacks. The security forces, present in 35 of Nigeria's 36 states and currently engaged in combating one of the deadliest terrorist organizations in the world, Boko Haram, are also exhausted, overworked, and demoralized. They are soon entering the second decade of their conflict. It is estimated that many of the armed bandits are of Fulani origin, just like many of the victims. Banditry, encompassing armed robbery, murder, rape, and cattle rustling, is prevalent in Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Senegal, and Mali. [Sanchi et al. \(2022\)](#) suggested that these banditry actions might include anything from kidnapping to murder, robbery, rape, cattle theft, and other crimes. Their strategy involves attacking and maiming their victims when they least expect it. Most of the time, they ride swiftly on motorbikes through the woodlands into the area and engage in indiscriminate firing, particularly at night. Occasionally, they unleash terror on neighborhoods in the afternoon when they know there will be no police or soldiers around. As a result of this

growing menace, hundreds of people have lost their lives. Food insecurity and humanitarian disasters are making life increasingly difficult for many Nigerians. Numerous children have been orphaned, and women have been widowed overnight. Banditry activities have a detrimental impact on the management of Nigerian public primary schools in various ways, including the loss of manpower, poor educational quality, increased spending on education, infrastructure destruction, brain drain, closure of educational institutions, educational wastage, discouragement of children from pursuing education, promotion of foreign education, and internal displacement of learners.

Additionally, enrollment is one of the duties of school administration, but due to the level of insecurity brought on by banditry in the country, parents are hesitant to take their kids to school for fear that they would be kidnapped or killed by bandits (Sanchi *et al.*, 2022). The bandit attacks might affect students' attendance once classes restart. Many parents already assert that they do not think that schools are safe. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to analyze parents' and teachers perceived effect of banditry activities on pupils' enrollment in public primary schools in Gusau's local government area of Zamfara state.

Nigeria made clear its commitment to 2 ideas with the introduction of Universal Basic Education (UBE). First, all Nigerian children have a right to an education. Second, Nigeria can minimize the prevalence of poverty that the vast majority of its citizens face through education, and that education would be a tool for developing a productive and competitive economy. The 2014 National Policy on Education (NPE) emphasized that Basic Education is a right and by law compulsory for all children who are of school age. This is irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, location, or other distinguishing factors (Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, 2013). According to Zamfara Universal Basic Education Board (ZUBEB) (2021) stated that the enrolment of children in primary schools is Seventy-Eight Thousand Five Hundred and Fifty-Nine (78,559) as of 2017/2018. While in 2020/2021 the enrolment rate is Sixty-Eight Thousand Five Hundred and Seventeen (68,517).

However, enrollment is one of the responsibilities of school administration. However, due to the heightened insecurity caused by banditry in the country, parents are reluctant to send their children to school out of fear that they might be kidnapped or killed by bandits (Sanchi *et al.*, 2022). The attacks by bandits could impact students' attendance once classes resume. Many parents already express doubts about the safety of schools. Hence, the objective of this article is to examine the perceived impact of banditry activities on pupils' enrollment in public primary schools in the Gusau local government area of Zamfara state, as perceived by parents and teachers.

The act of banditry had made some states in the northwest close down some schools that are located in rural areas. The following will be discussed following the aforementioned effects as banditry activities had many detrimental effects on enrollment in public primary schools, such as fear of attack or kidnapping, internal displacement, instability in parents' livelihoods and food security, closure of schools, loss of manpower, destruction of infrastructural facilities, etc.

The negative impact of banditry activities has made parents find it very difficult in enrolling their children in public school. The Nigeria Education Data Survey (NEDS) is saying that teachers and other education sector stakeholders find it difficult to convince parents to allow their children to stay at school because of frequent attacks on educational facilities. A substantial majority of respondents (59.7%) indicated that they were unwilling to take their children to school because they were concerned over frequent attacks on school buildings. In a similar vein, Sanni (2015) notes that the Nigerian Education Data Survey (NEDS), finds that

ongoing attacks make it even more difficult for teachers and other stakeholders to convince parents to let their children stay at school.

In the North West, one of the most noticeable consequences of banditry activities includes the internal displacement of neighborhood people. According to Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2020) stated that more than 200,000 individuals have been internally displaced in many communities in Zamfara, Katsina, and Sokoto states between January and August 2019. Most of these IDPs were women, children, and the elderly taking refuge in the neighboring Republic of Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. Reports from the Zamfara State Government revealed that banditry has resulted in an estimated 22,000 widows and 44,000 orphans since 2011 in Zamfara State. This by extension prevents those affected from having access to education. The provision by Federal and State governments of social services and public facilities has been adversely impacted. Instead, state government funds that would have been dedicated to delivering social services were redirected to respond to the challenge of defense. Many remain unused or under-used even where governments have constructed hospitals and schools, as the local population has been displaced or residents avoid using them for fear of attacks.

A climate of instability has been created by banditry activities in north-western Nigeria most especially in Zamfara state and this extension may affect children's enrollment in basic education. According to [Abdulrasheed \(2021\)](#), the activities of the bandits had adversely affected the exploitation of environmental resources (e.g. gold mining) in the North-West region, thereby affecting the livelihoods and growth potential of the affected states. Artisanal mining activities were attracted by the presence of lucrative gold deposits in Zamfara State, as bandits and families relied on it for livelihood maintenance. Nevertheless, gold is stolen and sold on the international market, resulting in a loss of income for the economy of Nigeria. Alhaji Abubakar Bwari, the former Minister of Mines and Steel Production, disclosed that Nigeria lost 353 billion Naira from the illegal activities of gold miners and smugglers between 2016 and 2018. More so, because agriculture is the backbone of local economies, agricultural disruption due to bandit attacks affects agricultural productivity, with significant repercussions for food security. Most farming communities have been forced to abandon their farms, especially in areas close to forest areas, as bandits have taken advantage of these locations to attack communities. Few farmers who remained behind were subject to bandit taxation before gaining access to their farms. Approximately 30% of the agricultural land in Kaduna State was abandoned by the affected communities, while agricultural activities in Zamfara and Katsina States were limited to a few areas, resulting in a 60% decrease in food output ([Rufai, 2018](#)). These instabilities in community livelihoods may have devastating consequences on school enrollments since many parents may not be economically buoyant to obtain the requirements for school enrollment such as school uniforms, written materials, etc. In Kebbi State, as a result of bandit attacks, over 350 rice farmers were affected by farmland abandonment. The diminishing income of local farmers and other vulnerable groups, especially women, also affects their ability to support education for children and household income [Abdulrasheed \(2021\)](#).

The escalating banditry activities in the Gusau local government area of Zamfara state have raised concerns regarding their impact on pupils' enrollment in public primary schools. The perception of parents and teachers regarding the effect of these banditry activities on enrollment needs to be explored to understand the challenges faced by the education system in the region. This study aims to investigate the perceived influence of banditry activities on the enrollment of pupils as reported by parents and teachers, thereby identifying the specific

issues and obstacles that affect enrollment in selected public primary schools in Gusau local government area.

This research question guided the study What are the parents and teachers' perceived effects of banditry activities on children's enrollment in some selected public primary schools?

2. METHODS

The research adopted a descriptive research design for this study. The population of the study consisted of all the teachers and parents in Gusau Local Government of Zamfara State. There is 8,635 public primary school which consists of 383,712 teachers. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 80 parents and 80 teachers as respondents. The respondents are the parents, teachers that are willing to participate in this study. The instrument for data collection is a self-developed questionnaire with 16 items titled Effect of Banditry Activities on Children Enrollment Questionnaire (EBACEQ). The researcher used a modified 4 points Likert-type scale for the response option. For example, Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree, Disagree (SA:4, :3, SD:2, D:1,). The instrument was validated, and its reliability score of 0.87 was obtained. The EBACEQs were administered to the teachers in their schools while 80 EBACEQs were administered to some parents at the closing hours when they came to pick up their wards. Other parents who were known to have wards in the schools that were closed or internally displaced were visited in their respective IDP camp and homes where the EBACEQ were administered. Questionnaires that were duly filled and returned from both teachers and parents were analyzed and interpreted descriptively using tables, frequency, percentages, and means respectively.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Research Question: What are the parents and teachers perceived effects of banditry activities on pupils' enrollment in selected public primary schools in Gusua, Zamfara State?

The respondents were asked to indicate the perceived effect of banditry activities on children's enrollment into public primary school. **Table 1** summarizes the relevant data obtained.

Table 1 shows the responses of the respondents on the influence of the perceived effect of banditry activities on pupils' enrollment in public primary schools in selected rural areas in Gusua, Zamfara State. It was indicated that the following items affect pupils' enrollment in public primary schools in selected rural areas in Gusua, Zamfara State. Banditry activities have a negative effect on children's enrollment in public primary schools(mean=2.89), Fear of being kidnapped caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollment into public primary schools(mean=2.80), Closure of educational institutions caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollments(mean=2.85), The destruction of infrastructural facilities caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollments in public primary schools(mean=3.17), Loss of manpower caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollments(mean=3.03), Insecurity in public schools caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollments into public primary schools(mean=2.95), Instability in parents' livelihoods and food security caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollments(mean=2.63, Loss of lives caused by banditry activities affects children's enrolments in public primary schools(mean=2.83). In light of the result, it was indicated that both parents and teachers admitted the long side effect of banditry activities influenced pupils' enrollment in public primary schools in selected

rural areas in Gusua, Zamfara State. This is evidenced by the weighted mean (2.89) which is a numeric indicator that the perceived effect of banditry activities influenced pupil's enrollment in public primary schools in selected rural areas in Gusua, Zamfara State. The findings of the study on the influence of the perceived effect of banditry activities on pupil enrollment in public primary schools in selected rural areas in Gusau, Zamfara State are as follows.

Table 1. Summary of frequency count, mean, and percentage showing the influence of the perceived effect of banditry activities on pupil's enrollment in public primary school in selected rural areas in Gusua, Zamfara State.

S/N	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Banditry activities have a negative effect on children's enrollment in public primary schools	56(37.3)	40(26.7)	35(23.3)	19(12.7)	2.89
2	Fear of being kidnapped caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollment into public primary schools.	50(33.3)	45(30.0)	30(20.0)	25(16.7)	2.80
3	Closure of educational institutions caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollments.	48(32.0)	53(35.3)	28(18.7)	21(14.0)	2.85
4	The destruction of infrastructural facilities caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollments in public primary schools	79(52.7)	29(19.3)	30(20.0)	12(8.0)	3.17
5	Loss of manpower caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollment	64(42.7)	47(31.3)	18(12.0)	21(14.0)	3.03
6	Insecurity in public schools caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollment in public primary schools.	60(40.0)	39(26.0)	35(23.3)	16(10.7)	2.95
7	Instability in parents' livelihoods and food security caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollments.	40(26.7)	37(24.7)	50(33.3)	23(15.3)	2.63
8	Loss of lives caused by banditry activities affects children's enrolments in public primary schools	44(29.3)	47(31.3)	48(32.0)	11(7.3)	2.83
	Weighted Mean					2.89

Decision rule: Not influenced =00-2.49 Influenced= 2.50-4.00

Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentages

The study indicates that both parents and teachers acknowledged the long-term effects of banditry activities on pupils' enrollment in public primary schools in selected rural areas in Gusau, Zamfara State. This is supported by the weighted mean of 2.89, which serves as a numeric indicator of the perceived influence of banditry activities on pupils' enrollment in the mentioned areas.

Here are the findings of the study on the influence of the perceived effect of banditry activities on pupil's enrollment in public primary schools in selected rural areas in Gusau, Zamfara State, arranged according to their means rating:

- (i) The destruction of infrastructural facilities caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollment in public primary schools (mean=3.17).
- (ii) Loss of manpower caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollment (mean=3.03).

- (iii) Insecurity in public schools caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollment in public primary schools (mean=2.95).
- (iv) Closure of educational institutions caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollment (mean=2.85).
- (v) Loss of lives caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollment in public primary schools (mean=2.83).
- (vi) Banditry activities have a negative effect on children's enrollment in public primary schools (mean=2.89).
- (vii) Fear of being kidnapped caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollment into public primary schools (mean=2.80).
- (viii) Instability in parents' livelihoods and food security caused by banditry activities affects children's enrollment (mean=2.63).

3.2. Discussion

Numerous studies have explored the relationship between security challenges and children's enrollment. For example, a study by Shomaraji, Suleiman, and Dalhatu (2020) in the context of Nigeria found that parents' concern about their children's safety and the prevalence of violence significantly impacted enrollment decisions. This aligns with the perception mentioned in the finding. Furthermore, research conducted by Oni and Faniran (2020) in Nigeria examined the effect of security challenges on educational outcomes. Their study highlighted that insecurity resulting from banditry activities, among other factors, contributed to low school attendance and decreased enrollment rates.

These studies and others provide evidence that supports the perception of parents and teachers regarding the influence of banditry activities on children's enrollment in public primary schools. The findings underline the need for interventions and strategies to address security concerns and create a safe and conducive learning environment for children.

Consistent with these findings, [Abdulasheed \(2021\)](#) posited that the diminishing income of local farmers and other vulnerable groups affects their ability to support education for children and household income; likewise, many schools remain closed or unattended, as the local population has been displaced or residents avoid using them for fear of attacks. Also, in line with this finding, [Ogunode and Ahaotu \(2021\)](#) posits that the continuous closure of schools by the state government in Northern Nigeria whenever there is any attack on educational institutions within or close to the state is also responsible for low enrollments.

4. CONCLUSION

From the analysis of the findings of this study, it was concluded that banditry activities have affected children's enrollments into public primary schools in Gusau local Government of Zamfara state, thus, Governments must show strength and rise to their responsibilities to protect our schools, lives, and property. Education must not be allowed to be silenced by bandits. School children and indeed educational institutions deserve to be protected from becoming soft targets for kidnappers, bandits, or terrorists. Individuals and non-governmental organizations should also help the government with information that can make schools less vulnerable to attacks.

The following recommendations were made in line with the findings of this study:

- (i) Government should as a matter of urgency take serious measures in eradicating banditry activities in the Northwest most especially in the rural metropolis of Zamfara state. By

deploying security personnel to guide all educational institutions in the affected communities.

- (ii) The Nigerian government should strategize to create meaningful employment for the youths to reduce idleness, which culminated in banditry.
- (iii) Individuals and non-governmental organizations should help the government with information that can make schools less vulnerable to attacks.
- (iv) Government should create and strengthen peace and conflict management mechanisms to prevent further escalation of the root cause of banditry activities.
- (v) Government and other stakeholders should help to rehab and refurbish the destroyed school buildings and facilities
- (vi) Provision of alternative learning facilities with beefed-up security for those that have been displaced from their homes and schools due to banditry.
- (vii) Peace education should also be inculcated in all Nigerian schools, from primary to tertiary institutions.

5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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