



ABSTRACT

This study examined the Psychological Influence of Fulani Herdsmen Kidnappings Trauma on Students' Academic Motivation and Performance amidst COVID-19 among Secondary School Students in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Survey research design was

PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCE OF HERDSMEN KIDNAPPINGS TRAUMA ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC MOTIVATION AND PERFORMANCE AMIDST COVID-19 AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

The mention of the word kidnapping among any group or gathering brings not just terrible traumatic feelings or symptoms, but poses an existential threat to people's existence nowadays. The Herdsmen kidnappings



adopted for the study. Two research questions guided the study. A 25-items research questionnaire constructed by the researchers was used to collect data for the survey. The questionnaire consisted of two sections, rated on the modified 4-points Likert scale. The data obtained from the respondents were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 160 students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and 152 non-victim students making a total of 312 students as sample size in the study area (Chukun, Kajuru, and Kagarko LGAs of Kaduna State). The findings revealed that there was a significant mean difference in respondents' perception between the academic performance of secondary school students who were victims and those who were not victims of herdsmen kidnappings and a significant difference in respondents' perception between the academic motivation of secondary school students who were victims and those who were not victims of herdsmen kidnappings. The study therefore recommended that teachers and school administrators should pay more attention to traumatized students when teaching and refer them to school psychologists and counsellors where necessary. Students who experience traumatic stress and signs of mental health problems should be given relevant therapy. Conducive atmosphere should be provided by government to improve mental health and security in schools and enhance effective teaching and learning.

Keywords: Academic Motivation, Academic Performance, COVID-19, Herdsmen Kidnappings, Psychological Influence.

of students of recent, in not just Kaduna state but in many other parts



Nigeria that started as a joke is not just at an alarming rate, but worrisome and a matter of serious concern to not only Students, Parents of students, but the entire community at large. In Kaduna state, Herdsmen kidnappings of students poses a serious threat to the future education of young secondary school students and worst of all has resulted in severe childhood traumatic stress experiences in not just the many already kidnapped students, but even in those students not yet victims of kidnap. Traumatic stress experience has to do with exposure to or witnessing any event that is extremely threatening, and as a result the individual feels intensely frightened, horrified and helpless (Mishara1 and Gbaden, 2014). Childhood trauma has been receiving increased attention and it is increasingly being recognized as a 3 significant public health concern (Lang, Campbell, and Vanerploeg, 2015) cited by Uchenna & Bahago (2019). Trauma exposure involves actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence that is either directly experienced or witnessed, or learning that any traumatic experiences have happened to a loved one, or having repeated exposure to details of traumatic events. Exposure to traumatic events can disrupt brain development and can have immediate and lifelong adverse effects on social, emotional and physical wellbeing (Lang, Campbell, and Vanerploeg, 2015; Lansford 2012). The term “trauma” originated from Greek word (“wound”). Wound can be discussed in the perspective of both physical and psychic wounding but this study is looking at the psychological undertone. Trauma is a type of negative or unpleasant emotion. It is an emotional response someone has to an extremely negative event whose effect can be so severe that they interfere with an individual’s ability to live a normal life (APA, 2019). The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM) in Tull (2019) defined the elements of trauma within the framework of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder



(PTSD) as exposure to actual or threatened death, or serious injury which the exposure may result from situations in which the individual:

1. Directly experiences the traumatic event
2. Witnesses the traumatic event in person
3. Learns that the traumatic event occurred to a close family member or friend
4. Experiences, first hand, repeated, or extreme exposure to aversive (unpleasant) details of the traumatic event

Peichl (2007) stated that Trauma is a toxic condition, a mixture of intense anxiety, absolute helplessness and a loss of control. The mental imprint of frightening experiences may take the form of memory loss, identity loss or unconsciousness, in which case, if the impact remains unresolved could lead to permanent damage. Perception plays an important role to frightening experiences. Levine (2005) maintained that perception of an event by an individual determines the nature and extent of the impact it has on the person. Trauma occurs when a person is overwhelmed by events and responds with intense fear and helplessness. It is a response in relation to perception, proving why two people can experience same traumatic event or circumstance and be impacted in different ways.

Corsini (2002) described traumatic events as situations such as: rejection, divorce, combat experiences, civilian catastrophes, and racial or religious discrimination.

Psychologists for instance Scaer (2005) have traced the effect of trauma to the brain and its subsequent inhibition to human activities. When one is overwhelmed by traumatic experience or he/she is repeatedly being subjected to or witnessed distress, his/her coping mechanism can be overloaded. The overloading may in turn result to disturbing experiences remaining frozen or unprocessed in the brain.



Such unprocessed memories and feelings are stored in the limbic system of the brain in a “raw” and emotional form. The limbic system maintains traumatic memories in an isolated memory network, associated with emotions and physical sensations. When the individual experiences events similar to the one he/she has been through, the limbic system’s traumatic memories will trigger. The memory itself may be long forgotten but the painful feelings such as anxiety, panic, anger or despair are continually triggered in the present, inhibiting the individual’s ability to live in the present and learn from new experiences.

Confirming the effect of trauma, Sutton (2002) explains that the sensory overload occurring during a traumatic event can indeed result in lasting damage to brain process. The indication is that alteration of neurological processes can result to certain psychological and physical symptoms which are aversive to human development.

Some of the symptoms are identified as: shock, anger denial, mood swings, guilt, shame, anxiety, fear, withdrawing from others, depression, despairing, feeling numb, emotional overwhelm, difficulty concentrating. The physical symptoms may include nightmares, racing heartbeat, fatigue, muscle tension, edginess, agitation aches, pains and others.

Some of the incidences of students’ herdsmen kidnappings in Kaduna recently include the Greenfield University students kidnapping that took place on the 20th April 2021 in which some students lost their lives, the School of Forestry 39 students kidnap on the 11th March, 2021 and that of the Bethel Baptist High school students kidnap July 5 2021, where more than 100 students of Bethel Baptist High School were taken away at about 2 am on 5th July 2021 (morning star news 2021). According to the United Nations Children Agency (2021), tragically such school abductions are becoming common in northern Nigeria,



where since December about 950 students have been kidnapped—half in the past six weeks, according to the UN Children’s Agency. This is the fourth abduction of students in Kaduna state in the past six months. There have been seven mass kidnappings of students in Nigeria so far this year. These mass kidnappings of students have made the learning environment of most schools in Kaduna not only unsafe but traumatic at the mention of school to students. Many students are afraid to go to school any more as they may fall victims of herdsmen kidnap.

Mohammed et al (2021) observed that a good learning environment that does not pose threats to the students would be ideal for every student to learn. If students experience the society as a caring and a supportive place where there is a sense of belonging and everyone is valued and respected they will tend to appreciate more fully the learning environment and the process of learning. This environment would create positive results for students, academically and socially. Thus, in an environment where there is wanton destruction of lives and properties, the student’s interests and attentions to learn may be affected which may in turn affects their academic performances. These insurgent attacks can lead to many psychological problems like anxiety and trauma which can consequently affect the academic motivation of students as well as their academic performance. Students may have low academic motivation to learn, and this may affect their academic performance. Therefore, it is in line with the above observations that the researcher embarked on this study.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To find out the mean difference in respondents’ perception between the academic motivation of senior secondary school



students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those who are not victims of herdsmen kidnappings amidst covid-19 among secondary school students in Kaduna state.

2. To find out the mean difference in respondents' perception between the academic performance of senior secondary school students who are victims of the herdsmen kidnappings and those who are not victims of herdsmen kidnappings among secondary school students in Kaduna state.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the mean difference in respondents' perception between the academic motivation of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those who are not victims of herdsmen kidnappings amidst covid-19 among secondary school students in Kaduna state?
2. What is the mean difference in respondents' perception between the academic performance of senior secondary school students who are victims of the herdsmen kidnappings and those who are not victims of herdsmen kidnappings among secondary school students in Kaduna state?

Research Hypotheses

The following two null hypotheses guided the study. They were tested at 0.05 level of significance

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in respondents' perception between the academic motivation of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those secondary school students who are not in Kaduna state.



Ho2: There is no significant difference in respondents' perception between the academic performance of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnap and those who not victims of herdsmen kidnap in Kaduna State.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey as a research design. The population of the study comprised of 413 students. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 260 students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and 152 non-victim students; making a total of 312 students as sample size in the study area (Chukun, Kagarko and Kajuru, LGAs of Kaduna State), Nigeria.

The instrument used for this study was a modified Likert-type questionnaire titled, "Students' Motivational and Academic Performance Assessment Questionnaire" (SMAPAQ). The instrument for the study was categorized into two sections, the first section comprised of questions on the extent of trauma on the students' school motivational activities. It contained 12 items. The second section was on the intensity of the trauma and its influence on the academic performance of the students. It was rated on modified 4 point Likert scale of "not at all, a little bit, a bit high and extremely". It contained 13 items; making 25 items in total. The items were constructed by the researchers and validated by two experts in the Faculty of Education, Veritas University, Abuja. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. The coefficient was found to be 0.82. Frequency counts were used to quantify the responses. The instrument was administered by the researchers with the help of two research assistants. The questionnaire was collected on the spot to avoid any form of bias from the respondents. The collected data were analyzed using mean to



answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the research hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Questions

The two questions earlier raised in the study were answered descriptively:

Research Question 1: What is the mean difference in respondents' perception between the academic motivation of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those who are not victims of herdsmen kidnappings amidst covid-19 among secondary school students in Kaduna state?

Table 1a: Mean analysis showing difference in respondents' perception between the academic motivation of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those who are not victims of herdsmen kidnappings amidst covid-19 among secondary school students in Kaduna state as perceived by victims of herdsmen kidnappings

S/N	Item	Victims' Level of Perception				Mean	Decision
		EXT	MOD	ALB	NAA		
1	Having bad dreams or nightmares	80	45	23	12	3.21	Agreed
2	Being highly alert or on guard always	86	50	14	10	3.33	Agreed
3	Trying not to think about the	71	45	19	25	3.01	Agreed



	traumatic experience of school kidnappings						
4	Feeling as if I have to watch out for dangers or threats of kidnappings	65	46	21	28	2.93	Agreed
5	Feeling unreal as in living in a dream	64	51	23	22	2.98	Agreed
6	I am not motivated to go to school often	56	54	24	26	2.88	Agreed
7	Having outbursts of anger or irritable behavior	45	66	31	18	2.86	Agreed
8	Feeling isolated from other students	53	57	21	29	2.84	Agreed
9	Feeling that I am bad or something is wrong with me	12	25	49	74	1.84	Disagreed
10	Trying to stay away from people, places or activities that remind me of the traumatic	56	47	19	38	2.76	Agreed



	experience(s) of school kidnappings						
11	Witnessed kidnappings of loved ones	56	45	21	38	2.74	Agreed
12	Directly experienced herdsmen kidnappings	78	46	13	23	3.12	Agreed
	Sectional Mean					2.88	Agreed

Scale Mean 2.50; n=160

Note: EXT: Extremely, MOD: Moderately, ALT: A Little Bit; NAA: Not At All

From Table 1a, it could be observed that the mean values of 3.21, 3.33, 3.01, 2.93, 2.98, 2.88, 2.86, 2.84, 2.76, 2.74 and 3.12 respectively were in agreement with items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12 while the mean value of 1.84 was in disagreement with item 9. The sectional mean of 2.88 indicated that some of the victims agreed that having bad dreams or nightmares, being alert or on guard always, trying not to think about the traumatic experience of school kidnappings, feeling as if they have to watch out for dangers or threats of kidnappings, feeling unreal as if living in a dream, not being motivated to go to school often, having outbursts of anger or irritable behavior, feeling isolated from other students, trying to stay away from people, places or activities that remind me of the traumatic experience(s) of school kidnappings, witnessed kidnappings of loved ones and directly experienced herdsmen kidnappings of students were the influence of herdsmen kidnappings on students' academic motivation while the remaining



victims disagreed with feeling that they are bad or something is wrong with them.

Table 1b: Mean analysis showing difference in respondents' perception between the academic motivation of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those who are not victims of herdsmen kidnappings amidst covid-19 among secondary school students in Kaduna state as perceived by non-victims of herdsmen kidnappings

S/N	Item	Non-Victims' Level of Perception				Mean	Decision
		EXT	MOD	ALT	NAA		
1	Having bad dreams or nightmares	23	31	46	52	2.16	Disagreed
2	Being highly alert or on guard always	12	35	49	56	3.28	Agreed
3	Trying not to think about the traumatic experience of school kidnappings	12	34	47	59	1.99	Disagreed
4	Feeling as if I have to watch out for dangers or threats of kidnappings	48	52	23	29	3.30	Agreed



5	Feeling unreal as in living in a dream	19	38	48	48	2.20	Disagreed
6	I am not motivated to go to school often	49	51	35	17	3.31	Agreed
7	Having outbursts of anger or irritable behavior	46	46	39	21	3.45	Agreed
8	Feeling isolated from other students	23	31	45	53	2.16	Disagreed
9	Feeling that I am bad or something is wrong with me	21	28	49	54	2.11	Disagreed
10	Trying to stay away from people, places or activities that remind me of the traumatic experience(s) of school kidnappings	20	31	45	56	2.10	Disagreed
11	Witnessed kidnappings of loved ones	56	61	21	14	3.05	Agreed
12	Directly experienced	0	0	0	152	1.00	Disagreed



	herdsmen kidnappings						
	Sectional Mean					2.51	Agreed

Scale Mean 2.50; n=152

Note: EXT: Extremely, MOD: Moderately, ALT: A Little Bit; NAA: Not At All

From Table 1b, it could be observed that the mean values of 3.28, 3.30, 3.31, 3.45 and 3.05 respectively were in agreement with items 2, 4, 6, 7 and 11 while the mean values of 2.19, 1.99, 2.20, 2.16, 2.11, 2.10 and 1.00 were in disagreement with items 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 12. The sectional mean of 2.51 indicated that some of the non-victims agreed that being alert or on guard always, feeling as if they have to watch out for dangers or threats of kidnappings, not being motivated to go to school often, having outbursts of anger or irritable behavior and witnessed kidnappings of loved ones were the influence of herdsmen kidnappings on students' academic motivation while the remaining non-victims disagreed with having bad dreams or nightmares, trying not to think about the traumatic experience of school kidnappings, feeling unreal as in living in a dream, feeling isolated from other students, feeling that I am bad or something is wrong with me, trying to stay away from people, places or activities that remind me of the traumatic experience(s) of school kidnappings and directly experienced herdsmen kidnappings.

Research Question 2: What is the mean difference in respondents' perception between the academic performance of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those who are not victims of herdsmen kidnappings amidst covid-19 among secondary school students in Kaduna state?



Table 2a: Mean analysis showing difference in respondents' perception between the academic performance of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those who are not victims of herdsmen kidnappings amidst covid-19 among secondary school students in Kaduna state as perceived by victims of kidnappings

S/ N	Item	Victims' Perception				Level of Mean	Decision
		EX T	MO D	AL B	NA A		
13	Having difficulty concentrating in my school academic work	54	47	21	38	2.73	Agreed
14	Not focusing on my academic study	56	45	23	36	2.76	Agreed
15	Having difficulty remembering what was taught at school	51	47	19	43	2.66	Agreed
16	Lack of facilities in the school	13	24	45	78	1.83	Disagreed
17	Feeling bad about going to school	61	46	19	34	2.84	Agreed
18	Do not see any need to go to school	21	34	49	56	2.13	Disagreed
19	Have difficulty doing my classwork/assignment	51	48	23	38	2.70	Agreed



20	Teachers do not come to school often	13	23	47	77	1.83	Disagreed
21	I have lost a session	46	52	31	31	2.71	Agreed
22	I have lost interest in going to school	56	45	23	36	2.76	Agreed
23	Witnessed kidnappings of students	54	49	34	23	2.84	Agreed
24	Directly experienced community kidnappings	61	52	23	24	2.94	Agreed
25	Experiencing insecurity both at school and at home	47	50	24	39	2.66	Agreed
Sectional Mean						2.57	Agreed

Scale Mean 2.50; n=160

Note: EXT: Extremely, MOD: Moderately, ALT: A Little Bit; NAA: Not At All

From Table 2a, it could be observed that the mean values of 2.73, 2.76, 2.66, 2.84, 2.70, 2.71, 2.76, 2.84, 2.94 and 2.66 respectively were in agreement with items 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 while the mean values of 1.83, 2.13 and 1.83 were in disagreement with items 16, 18 and 20. The sectional mean of 2.57 indicated that some of the victims agreed that having difficulty concentrating in their school academic work, not focusing on their academic study, having difficulty remembering what was taught at school, feeling bad about going to school, have difficulty doing my classwork/assignment, losing a session, losing interest in going to school, witnessed kidnappings of



students, directly experienced community kidnappings and experiencing insecurity both at school and at home were the influence of herdsmen kidnappings on students' academic performance while the remaining victims disagreed with lack of facilities in the school, not seeing any need to go to school and teachers not coming to school often.

Table 2b: Mean analysis showing difference in respondents' perception between the academic performance of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those who are not victims of herdsmen kidnappings amidst covid-19 among secondary school students in Kaduna state as perceived by non-victims of herdsmen kidnappings

S/ N	Item	Non-Victims' Level of Perception				Mean	Decision
		EX T	MO D	AL B	NA A		
13	Having difficulty concentrating in my school academic work	14	34	48	64	2.09	Disagreed
14	Not focusing on my academic study	21	36	45	50	2.18	Disagreed
15	Having difficulty remembering what was taught at school	13	36	49	62	2.11	Disagreed
16	Lack of facilities in the school	73	51	20	8	3.24	Agreed
17	Feeling bad about going to school	76	54	12	10	3.29	Agreed



18	Do not see any need to go to school	15	28	49	60	1.99	Disagreed
19	Have difficulty doing my classwork/assignment	14	31	48	59	2.00	Disagreed
20	Teachers do not come to school often	35	30	37	50	2.33	Disagreed
21	I have lost a session	34	35	41	42	2.40	Disagreed
22	I have lost interest in going to school	20	32	46	54	2.11	Disagreed
23	Witnessed kidnappings of students	77	54	15	6	3.32	Agreed
24	Directly experienced community kidnappings	34	30	59	29	2.45	Disagreed
25	Experiencing insecurity both at school and at home	79	56	14	3	3.39	Agreed
Sectional Mean						2.53	Agreed

Scale Mean 2.50; n=152

Note: EXT: Extremely, MOD: Moderately, ALT: A Little Bit; NAA: Not At All

From Table 2b, it could be observed that the mean values of 3.24, 3.29, 3.32 and 3.39 respectively were in agreement with items 16, 17, 23 and 25 while the mean values of 2.09, 2.18, 2.11, 1.99, 2.00, 2.33, 2.40, 2.11



and 2.45 were in disagreement with items 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 24. The sectional mean of 2.53 indicated that some of the non-victims agreed that lack of facilities in the school, feeling bad about going to school, witnessed kidnappings of students and experiencing insecurity both at school and at home were the influence of herdsmen kidnappings on students' academic performance while the remaining non-victims disagreed with having difficulty concentrating on their school academic work, not focusing on their academic study, having difficulty remembering what was taught at school, not seeing any need to go to school, have difficulty doing their classwork/assignment, teachers not coming to school often, losing a session, losing interest in going to school and directly experienced community kidnappings.

Hypotheses Testing

The two null hypotheses earlier formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in respondents' perception between the academic motivation of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those secondary school students who are not in Kaduna state.

Table 3: t-test analysis showing difference in respondents' perception between the academic motivation of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those secondary school students who are not in Kaduna state

Variables	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	t _{-cal}	t _{-tab}	Sig (P _{-cal})	Remarks
Victims of Kidnapping	160	8.24	1.321	310	2.179	1.653	0.000	Reject H ₀₁
Non-Victims of Kidnapping	152	6.47	1.221					

Significant at $df=310$; $P \leq 0.05$, $t_{-cal} > t_{-tab}$



Table 3 showed t-test analysis of difference in respondents' perception between the academic motivation of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those secondary school students who are not in Kaduna state. The t_{cal} value of 2.179 was found to be greater than the t_{tab} value of 1.653 given 310 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. The t_{cal} value was significant since it was greater than t_{tab} value, the null hypothesis was rejected. It implied that there was a significant difference in respondents' perception between the academic motivation of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those secondary school students who are not in Kaduna state.

H_{02} : There is no significant difference in respondents' perception between the academic performance of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those secondary school students who are not in Kaduna state.

Table 4: t-test analysis showing difference in respondents' perception between the academic performance of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those secondary school students who are not in Kaduna state

Variables	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	t_{cal}	t_{tab}	Sig (P _{cal})	Remarks
Victims of Kidnapping	160	8.24	1.421	310	2.279	1.653	0.000	Reject H_{01}
Non-Victims of Kidnapping	152	7.47	1.321					

Significant at $df=310$; $P \leq 0.05$, $t_{\text{cal}} > t_{\text{tab}}$



Table 4 showed t-test analysis of difference in respondents' perception between the academic performance of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those secondary school students who are not in Kaduna state. The t_{cal} value of 2.279 was found to be greater than the t_{tab} value of 1.653 given 310 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. The t_{cal} value was significant since it was greater than t_{tab} value, the null hypothesis was rejected. It implied that there was a significant difference in respondents' perception between the academic performance of senior secondary school students who are victims of herdsmen kidnappings and those secondary school students who are not in Kaduna state.

Conclusion

This study had shown that herdsmen kidnappings had a significant influence on students' academic motivation and performance. The researchers, therefore, concluded from their findings that herdsmen kidnappings made students panic while attending schools and impacted negatively on the motivational and Academic activities of Secondary School Students victims of Herdsmen kidnappings in Kaduna State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

1. Teachers and school administrators should pay more attention to traumatized students when teaching and refer them to school psychologists and counsellors where necessary in order to be motivated academically.
2. Students who experience traumatic stress and signs of mental health problems should be given relevant therapy in order to improve their academic performance.



3. Conducive atmosphere should be provided by government to improve mental health and security in schools and enhance effective teaching and learning. Also, there should be adequate security measures in schools by the Government Authorities

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