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STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT AFTER TRAUMATIZATION AS A RESULT OF BANDITRY ACTIVITIES IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY GUSAU, ZAMFARA STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELLING

By

Umar Abubakar Nasarawa
&
Yusuf Umar Abdullahi

Abstract
This paper examined the Perception of psychosocial support by students of Federal University, Gusau after traumatization of banditry attack that occurred in the campus. Population of the study was students from the Faculty of education Federal University Gusau. A sample of 120 students (63 males and 57 females) was purposely selected for the study. Test-retest reliability co-efficient 0.81 was established the instrument using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). A descriptive survey research design was adopted and data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequencies and simple percentages. Results from the study show that majority of the students received psychosocial support from their families, friends, and Counsellors. Additionally, the students are satisfied with the psychosocial support they received from their families and the support they received has been helpful. The impact of counselling for the Students Perception of psychosocial support can be achieved by Professional approach to the scenario by curtailing the student's trauma. It was recommended that professional support by professional counsellors should be provided as quickly as possible to students. The management of the University should organize the counselling therapy for the victims to curtail the trauma. Counsellors can also organize group counselling for the student in campus and off campus; students who have the effect of traumatization for curbing of the problems and governmental/ non-governmental organizations should also provide immediate intervention to the student's victims who suffer from post-traumatic stress or trauma-related symptoms.
Keywords: Trauma, Psychosocial Support, School, Traumatic Stress Disorder, Banditry.

Introduction

The continuous vulnerability of youth involvement as instrument of bandit that further elongates the banditry involvement of youth specifically has become an important issue that needs to be addressed. On June 2023, more than 24 students of the Federal University of Gusau were abducted in the early hours of Friday after bandits invaded the Sabon-Gida community of the Bungudu Local Government Area of Zamfara State. Some of the students have been released while some are still under captivity. Consequently, several students were exposed to the traumatic event. Zamfara state has witnessed various forms of arm bandit attack. According to a recent report by Human Right Watch (2015), arm bandit's activities has resulted in the death of over 2,500 civilians between January and August 2014, and the displacement of over 10,000 residents within Bukkuyum, Shimkafi, Mafara, Gumi, Tsafe, Bungudu, all in Zamfara State etc. Nigeria as well as more than 80,000 as refugees in neighboring countries. Further estimate over 8,000 people have been killed and 7000 people most of whom are children and adolescents have been internally displaced during the bandits' activities, more than five years banditry attacked are still occurring in many local Government areas (NEMA, 2023). According to Eme and Anthony (2024), today we fear for our lives from kidnappers, political and economic related assassination and extra-judicial killings. These have rapidly become familiar features of our landscape. The impact of this massive sense of insecurity on both psychic and overall functioning of Nigerians cannot be over-emphasized. In view of the above, one can posit that Nigeria in recent times has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity.

Nwadialor (2021) opined that the problems of insecurity which used to be one of the lowest in the hierarchy of social problems facing this country seems to have assumed alarming proportions since the end of the Nigerian civil war which ended in l970. The problem of insecurity is much pronounced today due to social separation and disconnect in many communities. All these have inherent destructive tendencies that could threaten national peace and stability. Other dimension or causes of insecurity is politics or bitterness which usually characterized election years through assassinations, violence or destruction of lives and properties. Eme and Anthony (2023) posit that politics in current dispensation unlike previous republics have displayed politics of anxiety, which has played down dialogue, negotiations and consensus. Put differently, quest for political powers is among the causes of insecurity in the land.

Economic violence through deprivation, resource control and lopsided revenue sharing formula could also lead to insecurity. Furthermore, activities of organised violent groups like ethnic militia, vigilantes, secret cults and political thugs have

also contributed to insecurity Eme and Anthony (2023) identified the urbanization process as another major challenge of Nigeria security. This is because there is a strong and huge connection between security, environment and urbanization. Our society has witnessed considerable urbanization but without commensurate security strength. Furthermore, insurgency, kidnapping, armed robbery and corruption have taken alarming tolls on lives and properties in Nigeria, and has badly damaged both national and regional economies of our country. There is no noticeable will on the part of the government to fight corruption (Nigeria Bar Association, 2013).

According to Nwadialor, (2022), it would appear that unemployment is one of the strongest factors that cause insecurity. A situation where an alarming rate of about 40 percent of Nigerians, most of which are in the youth bracket, are not gainfully employed, either from the government, or private sector. The emergence of youth militancy in Niger Delta could be traced to this. Alawiye (2013) also observed that youths constitute a large proportion or Nigeria's population but despite their critical role in nation building, it is often observed that the country has not invested seriously in the youth, thereby making them an army involved in unprofitable activities.

Northern Nigeria has been affected by arm bandits and it has been transmitting to other parts of the country. Zamfara state has had its fair share of arm bandits coupled with the rise of insurgent activities which has destroyed economic, social and educational development of the state. Many schools were closed for quite a period of time, therefore, making schools inaccessible for students and their teachers. UNICEF (2007) reported that some 1.5 billion children- two thirds of the world's child population live in the 42 countries affected the violent, banditry, high-intensity conflict between 2002 and 2006. Further estimates show that there are 11 thousand refugees worldwide and there are 24.2 million people who are internally displaced because of conflict and banditry. In Nigeria, around 700,000 children have been forced to flee their homes as a result of the banditry and conflict in Northeast Nigeria between insurgents, military forces and civilian self-defense group (UNICEE, 2015). This report from UNICEF revealed that the number of children running for their lives within Nigeria, or crossing over the border to Chad, Niger and Cameroon, has more than doubled in just less than a year. The negative consequences of violent, banditry and conflicts are not just limited to the physical loss of lives or destruction of property. Survivors of violent conflicts arm bandits are typically mentally affected by the violence that they experience or witness (Korb, 2013).

Studies have shown that traumatic events like natural disasters, accidents, armed conflict or violence may cause acute stress disorders (ASD) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) Yule et al. (2000). Stress disorders are caused by an extreme stressor which may involve a threat to life or serious injury (NICE, 2005). Acute stress disorder (ASD) symptoms are psychic numbering, being dazed or less aware of surroundings, derealization, depersonalization, anxiety, increased arousal, re-experiencing and dissociative amnesia (APA, 2000). These symptoms usually occur within one month of the traumatic event. Mash and Wolfe (2002) identified three difficult types of symptoms that characterize PTSD. The first type is re-experiencing symptoms which have to do with having flashback or bad dreams about the trauma. These flashback symptoms are often elicited by event similar to the traumatic experience. The second is known as hyper-arousal symptoms. These include being having difficulty sleeping, feeling tense, angry outbursts and being easily frightened. The third symptom is avoidance symptoms. This has to do with a person trying to avoid situations or emotions that might cause anxiety or fear. These symptoms also include avoiding places, events or objects that are reminders of the frightening experiences; emotional numbing; feeling of guilt, depression, or worry; losing interest in activities that were hitherto enjoyable; or having difficulty remembering the traumatic event.

It is important to monitor regularly trauma symptoms of traumatized people so as to help refer them to where they can get treatment Goenian et al. (2005). Various studies have supported the use of individual and group cognitive behavioral therapy for reducing psychological symptoms among traumatized people Wellington et al. (2008). Hobfoll et al. (2007) identified five empirically supported components in crisis management. These include promoting a sense of safety, calming, self and community efficacy, connectedness, and hope. Techniques enhancing psychological sense of safety include those targeted at individual, organizational and community levels, while intervention should include a psychosocial system dimension.

The strategies ought to calm from cognitive behavioral therapy and other treatment procedures like breathing training, therapeutic grounding and deep muscle relaxation to indirect approaches such as community level psychoeducation (Hobfoll et al., 2007). Little or no research has been conducted to find out whether traumatizcd students in Zamfara state received any form of psychosocial support. Though the focus of the study is on students' perception of psychosocial support they received after traumatization, further research can be carried out to measure the effectiveness of treatment intervention for traumatized people (Welington et al., 2008).
The study aimed at evaluating whether psycho-social supports were offered to students exposed to a school banditry and what type of support did they received

most. This study also aimed at providing information to government agencies, healthcare organizations, governmental and nongovernmental organizations to provide adequate trauma support to people affected by arm bandits and conflict.

Statement of the Problem

Victims of arm bandits have experienced different kinds of traumatic activities. Individuals who have experienced traumatic events are found to be emotionally disturbed due to uncertainty, insecurity and banditry, serious injuries, including life threatening, sexual assaults, loss of property and love ones and fear of further attacks by the bandits. They also have symptoms of anxiety and stress due to their unstable mind and fear. Most banditry victims experience some degree of emotional maladjustment and psychological disposition. A period of mild disappointment or depression is normal in victims who have experienced traumatic activities and are emotionally disturb. Normal responses to traumatic events lead to shock and disbelief resulting in difficulties in accepting the reality of what happen, in fear that the same thing will happen again, sadness and helplessness based on the sudden, unpredictable nature of arm bandit activities which are associated which anxiety and depression leaving the individuals feeling vulnerable and helpless which may result in guilt, anger, and emotional instability and also found to increase the symptoms of emotional maladjustment. These problems if not properly adjusted, may eventually result to traumatic stress disorder. The researcher observed these factors and became interested in investigating the Students' perception of psychosocial support after traumatization as a result of banditry activities in Federal University Gusau, Zamfara State, Nigeria.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are as stated below:

i. To find out the types of psychosocial support received by students of Federal University Gusau after traumatization.

ii. To determine whether the psychosocial support received by the students is adequate.

Research Questions

The study is set to answer the following questions.

1 What are the types of psychosocial support mostly received by Students of Federal University Gusau?

2 To what extent does the psychosocial support received by students adequate?

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design. Population of this study is 120 students who witnessed the attack. The sample for this study consisted of 120 students purposely selected for this study because they are students who witnessed or experienced the banditry attack in the University campus. The sample consisted of 63 males and 57 females. The Faculty of Education and Extension Services is in the new site of the university and most of the students abducted are from this faculty. A questionnaire was developed for data collection; the questionnaire was distributed to all the 120 students in a class setting after the day's lectures.

The Psychosocial Support Scale is a self-designed instrument. The instrument had two sections; section A is the personal information of the respondents; section B contained 13 items. The first 11 items measure the types of psychosocial support: emotional, information, and instrumental. The last 2 items are to measure the adequacy of the received psychosocial support for each source. Generally, these items dealt with the psychosocial support students received from family, friends, governmental and Counsellors. The directions stated that research participants were going to indicate by ticking which among the family, friends and Counsellors and non-governmental organizations they have received most psychosocial support from. The validity of the instrument was established with thorough scrutiny by an expert in department of Guidance and counselling Shehu Shagari University of education Sokoto and the content validity of the instrument was found to be appropriate in measuring what the instrument intend to measure. The test-retest reliability method was used to establish the reliability coefficient of the instrument and reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained using the Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC).

The questionnaires were distributed to students with the assistance of two research assistances who are also lecturers in the university. The students were given 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire and return them immediately and they were also told to feel free and ask any question they may wish to ask.

Findings

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage. The results of the study were presented as follows:

Research question 1: What is the type of psychosocial support mostly received by students of Federal University Gusau?

Table 1: Responses on the type of psychosocial support mostly received by FUG Students.

S/N	Item description	Psychosocial Support Received		
		Family	**Friends**	**Government**
1.	Assist me to feel better	98(61.3%)	62(38.7%)	0(0%)
2.	Guide me to feel am really important person.	82(51.3%)	78(48.71%)	0(0%)
3.	Show me serious concern about my feelings.	91(56.91%)	79(43.11%)	0(0%)
4.	Helped me to deal with traumatic event.	83(51.91%)	77(48.11%)	0(0%)
5.	Provided me information about traumatic event	87(54.41%)	53(33.11%)	20(12.5%)
6.	Provided me with a place when I needed it.	121(75.61%)	39(24.41%)	0(0%)
7.	Helped to accept the incident as an accident.			
8.	Discussed on the decisions I made about the incident.	111(69.41%)	49(30.61%)	0(0%)
9.	Counsel me to understand the trauma.	136(85%)	24(15%)	0(0%)
10.	Encouraged me to relate with others.	92(57.5%)	68(12.5%)	0(0%)
11.	Let me know that they will be around if I need assistance.	141(88.11%)	19(11.9%)	0(0%)
12.	I feel good about the support I have received	139(86.91%)	21913.1%)	0(0%)
13.	I feel that the support that I have received was helpful.	122(76.31%)	38(23.71%)	0(0%)

The results in Table 1 above provided evidence that more than 50% of the students received most psychosocial support from their families. They also received some from their friends and they got little or none from governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Research Question 2: To what extent is the psychosocial support received by students adequate? This research question was answered by the high percentage (86.9%) of satisfaction obtained by the students from their family. Also 76.3% of the students feel that the support they got was helpful as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Other Psychosocial Support Offered to Victims of FGU Banditry attacked

Item description	**Satisfied**	**Perceived helpful**
Family	139(86.9%)	122(76.3%)
Friends	21(13.1%)	38(23.7%)
Government/Non-Governmental organisation	0(0%)	0(0%)

The results in Table 1 above provided evidence that more than 76% of the students received other psychosocial support from their family 23% from their friends. And no any support from governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of the study was to determine the students' perception of psychosocial support after traumatisation as a result of banditry activities in Federal University, Gusau. The study revealed that most of the psychosocial support students of Federal University, Gusau received in the University is from their families and some of the students received some support from their friends.

For almost one year after the incidence no governmental or non-governmental organization has provided the students with any/form of support that could help them in reducing posttraumatic stress symptoms they might have experienced. The study also revealed that a higher percentage (86.9%) of the students felt satisfied with the support they received from their families and 76.3% of the students felt that the support is quite helpful.

Findings from the study revealed that most students felt that the support they got from their families was important and this is consistent with a study that children exposed to a natural disaster reported support and emotional coping assistance from family to be important Prinstein et al. (1996).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provided evidence that many students of Federal University, Gusau received psychosocial support mainly from their families. It is important that professional counsellors' support be provided for students whose exposure to trauma is high or low suffer from PTSD symptoms and have a less supportive network. Clinical assessment and treatment approaches should be considered for students who experienced traumatic grief reactions in addition to depression and PTSD. Therefore, researchers need to engage in more study to examine the rate of PTSD amongst those affected by armed conflict, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of the crisis interventions.

Recommendations

1. Professional counsellors need to brace-up in sensitization of students in the University Campus for the uncommon challenges of assisting students in an insecure environment, as the study found insecurity and banditry as risk factor associated with students' trauma.
2. Immediate crisis support should be offered to students exposed to trauma. This immediate support can help reduce incidence of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). There is also need to provide professional help and follow-up by counsellors for those with significant trauma-related symptoms. This can be achieved through the engagement of both counsellors and clinical psychologists and all other professionals in the treatment of PTSD. Whenever possible, families of

traumatized student should be involved in the treatment of trauma-related symptoms. This is because parents and guardians play a central role in supporting their children exposed to traumatic events.

3. Governmental and Non-Governmental Organization should offer immediate support to students affected by crisis particularly in schools at any level of education. This can be done by applying crisis interventions that are empirically proven to be effective in treatment of PTSD and other trauma-related psychological symptoms.

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