

CRISES MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL-RELATED ASYMMETRIC WARFARE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

Oladejo, BOLAJI *PhD.*

Oladejobolaji2015@gmail.com
Tukur Buratai Institute for War and Peace
Nigerian Army University, Biu, Borno State, Nigeria.

Ekundayo, F. OCHOLI *PhD.*

ekundayoochili@gmail.com
Department Guidance and Counselling,
Faculty of Education,
University of Abuja, Nigeria.

&

Mogbekeloluwa, O. FAKOKUNDE *PhD.*

yinkajok@yahoo.com
Academic Planning and Quality Assurance
Nigerian Army University, Biu,
Borno State, Nigeria.

Abstract

No nation can develop amidst of asymmetric attacks on the lives and properties. In Nigeria today, insecurity of different kinds, has negatively impacted on aspects of national life, particularly the education sector. Thus, this study investigated crises management strategies adopted by the secondary school teachers in Borno State to manage school-related asymmetric warfare in their domains. The study employ descriptive design of a survey type. The population of the study consisted of all secondary school teachers in Borno State from which a total sample of 254 was drawn by means of stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The study employed a questionnaire tagged "Crises Management Strategies for School-Related Asymmetric Warfare Questionnaire (CMSSAWQ), which was face validated by five experts, and has 0.82 Cronbach's alpha value for the test of consistency. Data collected for the study was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study revealed that secondary school teachers in Borno State employed strategies like; seeking security information from local hunters/vigilantes, partnering with relevant security agencies on schools' defence, and volunteer themselves as spy, for managing asymmetric warfare challenges. Other findings revealed that respondents are not differ in their views of the study's problem based on gender and religion. Based on the findings of this study it was recommended among other that government at all levels should collaborate with secondary school teachers in area of crises intervention for asymmetric warfare challenges.

Keywords: Crisis Management Strategy, School-Related Asymmetric Warfare, Secondary School Teacher, Borno State

Introduction

The Nigerian community, both pre- and post-independence, has been characterized by inter-communal conflicts. However, the beginning of the 20th century marked a significant shift. Civilizations, technological advancements, weapon miniaturization, the quest for dominance, political interference, and displays of aggression have all contributed to the rise of asymmetric warfare in Nigeria. Lele (2014) defined asymmetric warfare as a type of conflict in which non-state actors use unconventional tactics and tools to exploit a state's vulnerabilities, achieving a disproportionate effect and undermining the state's strategic objectives. Acts of terrorism and insurgencies are common tactics of the asymmetric warfare. The widespread emergence of act of terrorism and insurgency has impacted every sector of the nation's economy. Its effects include school dropouts, an increase in the population of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), destruction of property and valuables, increased pressure on the national budget, and general chaos and unrest.

The northern part of Nigeria has been disproportionately affected by terrorism and insurgency compared to the southern region. States in the northern region that are severely impacted include; Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Kaduna, Yobe, and Zamfara State. However, Borno State is the most affected among these states. Asymmetric warfare in Borno State has particularly affected the educational environment, as schools have been targeted as soft targets by insurgents, turning them into epicenters of attacks and symbols of dominance. The infamous Chibok girls' abduction occurred on April 14, 2014, when the Boko Haram sect attacked Government Girls College in Chibok Local Government Area of Borno State and kidnapped 276 girls taking their exams. The use of asymmetric warfare in educational institutions has severely disrupted the educational system in the region, with thousands of secondary school teachers and students killed or injured and numerous school facilities destroyed beyond repair. According to the World Bank, the total cost of infrastructure damage due to asymmetric warfare is estimated at \$6.9 billion.

Counselling and warfare are two distinct fields that intersect in contexts where conflict and violence have profoundly impacted individuals and communities. The psychological effects of warfare, experienced by both combatants and civilians, make counselling interventions essential for addressing trauma, mental health issues, and the broader social implications of conflict. Counselling interventions have proven to be effective in mitigating the impacts of terrorism and insurgency and in developing countermeasures for future occurrences. To provide comprehensive and sustainable counselling support for secondary school teachers in managing the educational system in Borno State, this paper will explore the following thematic areas: an overview of asymmetric warfare in educational institutions in Borno State, the impacts of asymmetric warfare on educational institutions, and counselling interventions for secondary

school teachers to enhance effective school management.

Literature Review

Contemporary asymmetric warfare is particularly linked with insurgency and terrorism, as well as a shifting geopolitical world order following the end of the Cold War, which saw the decline of state monopoly over security, military, and moral authority (Pashakhanlou, 2018). Ogunode and Ishaya (2021) highlighted that insecurity is a major issue affecting both academic and non-academic staff in public schools in Nigeria. Insecurity challenges have significantly impacted public institutions, including secondary schools, across the country. Many secondary school teachers have abandoned their schools and relocated to more peaceful states, leading to a brain drain in conflict-affected regions. Violence associated with the Boko Haram insurgency has claimed an estimated 11,000 lives in Nigeria between 2003 and 2014, as reported by Johns Hopkins University, with over 5,000 of these fatalities recorded in 2014 alone.

Asymmetric strategies often exploit a target's lack of awareness or preparedness against specific threats, utilizing methods different from those typically employed in conventional warfare. These strategies may also involve the use of new or unconventional weapons (Oluka & Igwe, 2020). The challenges presented by asymmetric warfare have profoundly affected secondary school teachers and students, resulting in disruptions to education and the migration of educators from conflict zones.

Retrospect on Incidences of Asymmetric Warfare in Borno State

The prevalence of asymmetric warfare which was marked by various heinous crimes such as, abductions, suicide bombings, arson, and gun shootings among other, has been significant within secondary educational institutions in Borno State over the years running to over two decades.

1. In February 2012, insurgents set ablaze at least 12 schools in and around Maiduguri, Borno State, over a two-week period (Human Rights Watch, 2016).
2. In 2012, explosions and gunfire struck Gomari Primary School, destroying educational facilities (Vanguard, 2012).
3. According to a report by Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) (2013), 50 out of 175 schools in Borno State were burned down by insurgents.
4. On April 14, 2014, 276 secondary school girls were abducted in Chibok, Borno State, with about 82 of them still in captivity (Amnesty International, 2024).
5. In November 2014, an attack on Zanna Mobarti Primary School in Damasak, Borno State, led to the abduction of an estimated 300 young students (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

Recently, the frequency of such incidents has decreased, and the educational system is beginning to recover. This improvement is attributed to the efforts of the Nigerian forces, the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), the Borno State Government, humanitarian organizations, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), non-governmental organizations,

and the resilience of local communities. The return of relative stability has enabled secondary school teachers and students to resume educational activities, though challenges remain.

Consequences of Asymmetric Warfare in Secondary Schools

Globally, the consequences of asymmetric warfare are numerous. In Nigeria, despite government efforts to eradicate these problems, challenges persist, particularly in the educational sector in Borno State. The following consequences of asymmetric warfare have been identified by the authors of this paper, focusing on secondary school teachers and students:

- 1. Closures of Schools:** Many secondary schools have been closed for extended periods, disrupting the education of thousands of students. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2017) reported that over 57% of schools in Borno State, which was tagged as (the worst-hit state) were closed in 2017 alone. These closures have adverse effects, including increased learning deficits, loss of interest in learning, heightened risk of sexual abuse, and rising crime rates (Sultana et al., 2022; Mazrekaj & Witte, 2024).
- 2. Destruction of Educational Materials:** Asymmetric warfare has led to the destruction of critical educational infrastructure, including classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and administrative buildings, resulting in significant losses for secondary schools. Staff quarters, school fences, and other facilities have been targeted and destroyed. Humangle (2021) reported that 2,246 classrooms and a total of 512 public schools were destroyed by terrorists.
- 3. Loss of Lives:** The persistence and growing strength of insurgents in Borno State have led to a significant loss of life among secondary school teachers and students. Punch (2023) reported that 2,295 teachers have lost their lives, with 1,280 casualties (including both students and teachers) recorded due to insurgency in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa between 2009 and 2018.
- 4. Increase in IDP Population:** Asymmetric warfare in Borno State has led to mass displacement, with many people including secondary school teachers and students seeking refuge to protect their lives. Displaced individuals often live in camps where educational facilities are scarce or non-existent. On a positive note, Punch (2024) announced that the Borno State Development Commission has closed 90% of IDP camps, as the government has facilitated the successful return of many IDPs to their ancestral homes.
- 5. Increase in Drop-Out Rate -** The closure of schools and displacement of people have contributed to an increased drop-out rate among secondary school students, as families, teachers, and students are forced to leave their homes in search of safety. UNICEF (2017) estimated that 3 million children require emergency educational support due to insurgency and terrorism. The Borno State Government and humanitarian organizations have initiated efforts to re-enroll students who have dropped out.

- 6. Psychological Impacts** - Asymmetric warfare poses not only physical threats but also psychological harm, which can impair individual and societal development both in the short and long term. Studies have identified various psychological impacts, including trauma (Amusan & Ejoke, 2017), distress (Adepelumi, 2018), Generalized Anxiety Disorder (Adejogbagbe, Omoniyi, Fatiregun, Dosumu, Onyejiaka, Ajaka & Fagbemi, 2024), and social impairment (Adeboye, 2021). Other associated consequences include brain drain, increased costs of running the education system, loss of manpower, and disruption of academic programs.

Crises Management Strategies for Managing School-Related Asymmetric Warfare

Different strategies, tactics, and personnel may be used in order to alleviate the traumatic experiences accompanied case of insurgency. In response to this, secondary school teachers have developed resourceful management strategies to help students and other educational stakeholders cope with the psychological impacts of asymmetric warfare, particularly those targeting students. Oluka and Igwe (2020) listed the following as various means by which school-related asymmetric warfare can be decisively managed:

- a. **Establish Alternative School:** Establishing temporary learning centers to ensure continuity of education when schools are unsafe.
- b. **Use of IDP Camps:** Providing educational services within Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps to ensure access to learning for displaced students.
- c. **Applying Counselling Intervention Strategies:** Offering psychological support and guidance to help students manage trauma resulting from violent attack in the school.
- d. **Organize Extra Moral Lessons:** Conducting supplementary classes to help students catch up on missed lessons due to school closures.
- e. **Provide Humanitarian Support Services:** Partnering with humanitarian organizations to provide aid to students and teachers in affected areas.
- f. **Partner with Vigilantes/Hunters:** Engaging community members, such as vigilantes and hunters, to help maintain security around schools.
- g. **Engage Youth Watch Keepers:** Involving youths in community-based surveillance to enhance safety.
- h. **Use of Religious Activities:** Utilizing faith-based gatherings to provide comfort, guidance, and support for affected students.
- i. **Organize Group Movement:** Encouraging students to always move in groups and avoid such secluded areas for safety. (Oluka & Igwe, 2020). The above highlighted management strategies have been instrumental in reducing and mitigating the psychosocial trauma faced by secondary school students affected by asymmetric warfare.

Theoretical Perspective to Asymmetric Warfare

Theory provides a foundation for understanding the dynamics and consequences of asymmetric warfare in an educational setting such as secondary schools and the broader environment in Borno State.

Securitization Theory

Securitization theory, introduced by Waeber in 1995, provides a framework for understanding how issues are transformed into matters of security. The theory suggests that securitization is an act, a productive moment that leads to a significant reconfiguration of a social state. Traditional security perspectives view security as the absence of military threats that could jeopardize the state's survival within an anarchic international system.

According to Waeber (1995), an issue is not inherently a security matter until influential actors label it as such. For example, former Nigerian President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan formally declared Boko Haram and Ansaru groups as terrorist organizations in 2013, in Nigeria. This declaration came after assessing the extensive damage and destruction caused by these groups, particularly within the educational system in Borno State, since 2009. In the setting of secondary schools, the securitization theory helps explain how violence against educational institutions becomes a matter of national security once the severity of attacks against students and teachers, such as abductions and school bombings, is recognized by key actors in government and society. This recognition enables the deployment of state resources and policy measures to protect schools and mitigate the effects of asymmetric warfare on students and teachers.

Research Questions

What are the crises management strategies adopted by the secondary school teachers in managing school-related asymmetric warfare in Borno State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant difference in the crises management strategies adopted by the secondary school teachers in managing school-related asymmetric warfare in Borno State, Nigeria based on gender.

H0₂: There is no significant difference in the crises management strategies adopted by the secondary school teachers in managing school-related asymmetric warfare in Borno State, Nigeria based on religion.

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design involves studying a group of individuals or items and collecting and analyzing data from a representative sample which will be generalized over the entire population. The population for this study consisted of all secondary school teachers in Borno State, and the target population comprised a total number of 1,438 teachers across public secondary schools in Borno State. A total number of

254 secondary school teachers were selected to participate in the study. They were selected from 6 LGAs (that is; Maiduguri, Biu, Manguno, Bama, Chibok, and Gwoza) out of the entire 27 LGAs in Borno State, representing 22.2%. The selection process involved stratified and simple random sampling techniques to avoid bias in the selection of the representatives of the study.

The instrument used for data collection for this study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers, which was titled “Crises Management Strategies for School-Related Asymmetric Warfare Questionnaire” (CMSSAWQ). The questionnaire comprised two sections: These are section A and B. The section A of this instrument gathered personal data from the respondents, including gender and religious affiliation. The section B of the instrument consisted of ten (10) structured items on different possible crises management strategies adopted for school-related asymmetric warfare in Borno State over the past few years by the participants. The instrument was face validated among 5 experts in the fields of Guidance and Counselling and Psychology, and Peace and Strategic Studies from 2 Federal Universities in Northern Nigeria. For the reliability testing of the instrument, a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.82 was obtained for the instrument using split-half method. The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data collected from the participant. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze demographic data, while mean and rank orders were to answer the research question. The two hypotheses formulated for the study were tested using independent samples t-test and they were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Personal Data of the Participants

After the data collection process, critical observation of the filled questionnaire from the participants indicated that two out of the total 254 administered questionnaire were invalid. Thus, a total number of 252 were analyzed in the study as presented below:

Table 1: Distributions of Participants’ Demographic Data

N	Variables	Frequency	Percentages %	
1.	Gender	Male	158	62.7
		Female	94	37.3
			252	100.0
2.	Religion	Christianity	78	31.0
		Islam	174	69.0
	Total	252	100.0	

Table 1 presents the demographic information of the participants of this study. From the table 1 above, it is indicated that 252 participants finally participated in the study, out of this samples, 158 (62.7%) were male, while 94 (37.3%) were female. In regard to the participants’

religious affiliation, 78 (31.1%) were Christians, while 174 (69.0%) were Muslims. However, no participant of this study indicated other religion apart from the two mentioned above after thorough analysis.

Answer to the Research Question:

Research Question 1: What are the crises management strategies adopted by the secondary school teachers for school-related asymmetric warfare in Borno State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents' Responses on the Crises Management Strategies for School-Related Asymmetric Warfare

S/N	Item Statements:	Mean	Rank Order
8.	seek security information from the local hunters/vigilantes on palpable planned attack on schools	3.17	1 st
2.	constantly partner with relevant security agencies on schools' defensive and protection initiatives of the governments.	3.15	2 nd
10.	volunteer to serve as spies/detective agents for schools.	3.12	3 rd
5.	improvise relevant teaching materials for the use of students to replace the one destroyed by insurgents to prevent stoppage in learning process.	3.04	4 th
3.	provide relief materials to schools during incidence to insurgency to complement government efforts.	2.80	5 th
1.	seek the service of professional guidance counsellors for counselling intervention for traumatized students during attacks.	2.78	6 th
6.	organize extra moral classes for students to accomplish the lost academic calendar to incident of insurgency	2.72	7 th
9.	use alternative schools for displaced students for continuation of lessons.	2.68	8 th
7.	partner with relevant agencies for financial support/aid for educational development of the affected schools.	2.62	9 th
4.	involve in the construction of temporary school building in IDP camps to allow continuation of academic activities among students.	2.58	10 th
Total Average Mean Score =		2.86	

Table 2 shows the crises management strategies adopted by the secondary school teachers for school-related asymmetric warfare in Borno State, Nigeria. From the rank order table

therefore, items 8, 2 and 10 with the statements such as; seek security information from the local hunters/vigilantes on palpable planned attack on schools; constantly partner with relevant security agencies on schools’ defensive and protection initiatives of the governments; and volunteer to serve as spies/detective agents for schools, with the mean scores of 3.17, 3.15, and 3.12 make the most responded to items on the list and thus, they were ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively. From the bottom side of the rank table, items 9, 7 and 4 make the least responded to items, with statements such as; use alternative schools for displaced students for continuation of lessons; partner with relevant agencies for financial support/aid for educational development of the affected schools; and involve in the construction of temporary school building in IDP camps to allow continuation of academic activities among students, and with mean scores of 2.68, 2.62 and 2.58. Thus, they were ranked 8th, 9th and 10th respectively.

From the ranked table presented above therefore, it can be deduced that all the 10 structured items have mean scores that above 2.5 that initially set as a benchmark for positive or negative response. Thus, the participants of the present study adequately utilized crises management intervention for managing asymmetric warfare in their various schools in Borno State, as none of the statements on the rank order table found below the 2.5 benchmark, and the overall mean score of 2.86 was also above the benchmark of 2.5. The results also suggested that the participants sought information to manage the prevailing situations than any other means.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the crises management strategies adopted by the secondary school teachers in managing school-related asymmetric warfare in Borno State, Nigeria based on gender.

Table 3: Mean, SD and t-test Results Showing Difference in the Types of Crises Management Strategies Adopted by the Respondents for School-Related Asymmetric Warfare in Borno State, Nigeria Based on Gender.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t	Crit. t	p-value
Male	158	32.08	4.10	250	0.84	1.96	0.124
Female	94	26.64	3.80				

Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value of 0.84 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 at the degree of freedom of 250 with a corresponding p-value of 0.124 which is greater than the significance value of 0.05. This result suggested that there is no significant difference in the crises management strategies adopted by the secondary school teachers in managing school-related asymmetric warfare in Borno State, Nigeria based on gender. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the crises management strategies adopted

by the secondary school teachers in managing school-related asymmetric warfare in Borno State, Nigeria based on gender is retained.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the crises management strategies adopted by the secondary school teachers in managing school-related asymmetric warfare in Borno State, Nigeria based on religious affiliation.

Table 4: Mean, SD and t-test Results Showing Difference in the Types of Crises Management Strategies Adopted by the Respondents for School-Related Asymmetric Warfare in Borno State, Nigeria Based on Religious Affiliation.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t	Crit. t	p-value
Christianity	78	24.70	5.20	250	1.24	1.96	0.140
Islam	178	28.86	4.68				

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value of 1.24 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 at the degree of freedom of 250 with a corresponding p-value of 0.140 which is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. This result therefore suggested that there is no significant difference in the types of crises management strategies adopted by the respondents for school-related asymmetric warfare in Borno State, Nigeria on the basis of religion. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the crises management strategies adopted by the secondary school teachers in managing school-related asymmetric warfare in Borno State, Nigeria based on religious affiliation was retained.

Discussion of Findings

The study has discovered in its empirical data analysis that most widely used crises management strategies for various asymmetric warfare experiences among secondary school teachers include; seeking security information from the local hunters/vigilantes on palpable planned attack on schools; constantly partnering with relevant security agencies on schools’ defensive and protection initiatives of the governments; and involved as volunteers to spy for school safety among other. The first finding above was in line with the findings of Jacob, Jacob and Ibrahim (2024), and Ogunode, Ukozor and Ayoko (2023) whose study have discovered that education stakeholders such as teachers do seek for security guidance from local vigilantes such as Yan Gora Vigilante Group in Biu community of Borno State. The second finding of this study corroborated the previous findings of the studies of Chinwuba (2024) and Akpabio, Nwogu and Kaegou (2019) which revealed that educators in their security endeavours do partner with relevant local security agencies to secure their schools from attacks. The third finding of this study also supported the empirical outcomes of Chinwuba (2024), and Alimba (2018) who had also discovered in their studies that school teachers involved in some security spy to assist in areas of combating incursions on school facilities and defenceless students and

teachers.

The hypothesis one tested in the study revealed that there was no significant difference in the crises management strategies adopted by the secondary school teachers in managing school-related asymmetric warfare in Borno State, Nigeria based on gender. This finding was in agreement with study of Akpabio, Nwogu and Kaegou (2019) whose respondents were equally not differ in their responses on school-community collaborations, including partnerships with local security agencies, influence security management in technical colleges on the basis of gender. However, this finding disagrees with the findings of Alimba (2018) whose study established a significant difference on their respondents' views of the related subject matter based on gender.

Similarly, the hypothesis two tested in the study revealed that there was no significant difference in the crises management strategies adopted by the secondary school teachers in managing school-related asymmetric warfare in Borno State, Nigeria based on religious affiliation. This was in tandem with the findings of the study conducted by Chinwuba (2024) whose respondents were not differ on the based on their religious affiliation and faith-based practices.

Conclusion

This study based on its empirical outcomes concludes that, secondary school teachers commonly adopted crises management strategies such as; seeking security information from the local hunters/vigilantes on palpable planned attack on schools; constantly partnering with relevant security agencies on schools' defensive and protection initiatives of the governments; and volunteer themselves to serve as spies/detective agents for their respective schools in order to manage crises induced asymmetric warfare in school settings in Borno State. It is also concluded by the study that the respondents were not differ in their approaches to manage the horror of asymmetric warfare on the basis of gender and religion.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government at all level should collaborate with secondary school teachers in area of crises intervention for asymmetric warfare challenges.
2. There is need to empower teachers irrespective of their gender on how to use appropriate information channels to cope with the challenges of asymmetric warfare.
3. The religious bodies should always encourage their congregants especially the teachers on the need to apply different approaches to manage cases of insurgency in their respective schools in order to assist their students achieve academically.
4. The relevant education stakeholders should collaborate with school teachers to alleviate the challenges of asymmetric warfare in their schools.

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