



## **Impact of Banditry Activities on Teaching and Learning English Language in Junior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

This study was on Impact of Banditry Activities on Teaching and Learning English Language in Junior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State, Nigeria. Two objectives were set up for the study as such; examine the extent of English language syllabus coverage amid banditry activities in junior secondary schools in Zamfara state and determine the English language evaluation strategies amid banditry activities in junior secondary schools in Zamfara state, research questions and hypotheses that guided the study were in line with the objectives. Descriptive survey research method was used. The total population of the study was 667 with the sampled of 481 respondents. The instrument used was self-structured questionnaire which consists of 20 items to collect data from the respondents. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis for appropriate interpretation to achieve the set objectives, hence chi-square statistical method was used in testing the two null hypotheses developed for the study. The outcome of the study revealed that English language syllabus are not fully covered by the teachers; teachers and examination bodies could not adequately evaluate the performance of students due to banditry activities in the state. The study came up with meaningful recommendations in order to ameliorate the security situation which would give room to peaceful atmosphere of learning so as to attain effective teaching and learning in the state.

**Keywords:** Banditry Activities, Teaching and Learning English, Junior Secondary Schools

### **Introduction**

Peace encompasses all aspects of life including education. It has been believed that no nation can grow, develop and progress without sound education to its citizens. Education system in Nigeria is faced with prevailing security challenges and it becomes a great threat to our education system. Despite the measures and strategies, the government is taking to tackle the menace, yet the situation is getting more worst like a wild-fire. For instance, in the last one decade alone, Nigeria has witnessed series of insecurity challenges and other social menace that range from armed-robbery, assassination, banditry, kidnapping, political violence, intra-religious violence, boko haram, Niger-delta militancy as well as inter-ethnic, farmers – herdsman, religious, communal and cults clashes.

Banditry attacks seem to be one of the major obstacles against our education system and records show that there are series of banditry attack here and there in the country and sometimes on schools and other educational institutions, through which killings of innocent school children and staff happens, vandalization of school facilities and structures. They often kidnap students and teachers of all educational levels in exchange for ransom. In view of this Ojo (2021) discloses that the level of insecurity observed has led to the United States, United Kingdom and others to list



Nigeria as an unsafe place to travel to; he added that the effects of insecurity on education are numerous but worthy of mentioning the significant drop-out in school enrollment rate, from the considerable number that was obtained in years before. He furthered that those reports have shown that the enrollment rate has been declined by whopping 23% which can be attributed to parents deciding against releasing their children to school for fear of being killed or kidnapped. Therefore, peaceful and safe school environment is a vital pillar for successful teaching and learning. When a school environment lacks peace and characterized with tension, teaching and learning process will be disturbed. Because both students and teachers will not stand the risk of losing their lives or freedom at school. In line with this Olusola (2021) states that when going to school is tantamount to changing into battle amid a swarm of bullets what chances do the average Nigerian child has, for a better education? He added that according to reports about 800 secondary school and university students have been kidnapped in a coordinated attacks by terrorists and bandits in the last six months alone.

However, insecurity is considered as being subjected to fear, threat, danger, molestation, intimidation, harassment in all aspects, which also has strong negative effect on teaching and learning in schools. At times thousands of Nigeria's school children are found in conflicts that result in tension and fear which affect not only their school attendance but their lives and properties. Capenter (2021) says; although the cost of the prevalent insecurity in Nigeria is difficult to measure in monetary or real terms, however it is clear to observers that it has cost Nigerians enormous human and material resources. Although, school attacks leading to abduction of students and teachers were not began recently, but they become more frequent in these days compared to year 2014 when 276 school girls of Government Girls Secondary School Chibok were abducted.

Frequent attacks on school environment resulting in abduction of students and teacher yield negative effect on students' academic achievement. As in accordance with the words of Akintunde and Musa (2016). General school attendance and enrollment are equally affected as parents pull their children out of schools while in some extreme cases insecurity situation leads to closure of schools. As it recently happened in Zamfara state when schools were shut-down for over five months, for fear of banditry attacks. Consequently, these attacks are not only meant for kidnapping and killing but usually damage the school properties and structures. In support of this Ameh (2015) says, these attacks on schools usually lead to vandalization and destruction of school facilities which discourages the establishment of new schools. Thus, government resources are depleted as fund meant for other developmental project are channel to tackling the aftermath of the attacks. As such, when the learning environment become unsecured. Educational officials cannot discharge their responsibilities effectively, and teachers on the other hand cannot devote to impart knowledge effectively to their students, and students at their own side cannot concentrate and pay full attention to the lessons. This episode may result in poor educational attainment in terms of quality of graduates at all levels of education, and manpower suffers which impinge on overall national development aspiration.

ALTO (2021) posited that English language is important in the areas of language and instruction, medium of communication among multilingual speakers, as an official language of 53 countries, a language of commonwealth nations, a predominant language used in science and technology, mostly used in media industry, used for digital communication, access to multiple



cultures, used mostly for diplomacy and tourism, one of the most important languages for international business as well as travelling made easier with good English communication skills.

Evaluation according to Hanna (2015) is a systematic process of determining the extent to which curriculum objectives are being achieved with the hope of suggesting approaches that could lead to improved teaching and better educational activities. In other words of Ololobou et al (2000) evaluation is a collection and use of information as a basis for rational decision making on the curriculum which needs to be improved, modified or terminated as the case may be. Yunusa (2008) considers evaluation as the process of getting information, analyzing it and drawing final conclusion from it.

Several factors are militating against full coverage of syllabus in teaching and learning English language in Junior Secondary Schools of Zamfara state. These factors become a common phenomenon in teaching and learning in these days. Some of which include; improper split of syllabus; frequent declaration of holidays/breaks; utilization of academic times for other school events; bulky contents of a given subject; utilizing lot times evaluating what has been taught due to large number of learners; unavailability of teachers and so on. Despite all the issues stated above. In the recent times another issue of banditry attacks on Nigerian schools have emerged that involves frequent attacks on schools that leads to kidnapping, killing of both students and teachers, usually with destruction of school facilities and structures.

Zamfara state is one of the Nigerian states that experiences much concentration of these attacks. Although governments of all levels have been taking different measures to tackle this deteriorating insecurity challenge, yet there are frequent banditry attacks on schools in the state. Many schools have been attacked by bandits' teams, damaged school facilities and abducted both students and teachers in mass for ransom. For instance, there was a banditry attack in September 2021 on Government Day Secondary School Kaya Maradun Local Government Area. The school has the enrollment of about 400 students both males and females. The source disclosed that, the bandits come on motorcycles in large number taking dangerous weapons at about 11pm to 12pm when students were writing JSLC examination. The bandits succeeded to abduct unspecified number of students and shot one student on his leg who was later being rushed to hospital. In another attack, Bello (2019) reported that the gunmen arrived on bikes carrying brandished weapons, shooting sporadically in the air, killed a man in Moriki town, before attacking the school where they kidnapped two teachers and four students. However, in the report of Kabir (2020) banditry attack occurred on Government Girls Science Secondary School Jangebe where the attackers' taking arms raided the school shooting into air and succeeded in kidnapping 317 school girls. "317 students were kidnapped by the armed bandits in Government Girls Science Secondary School Jangebe in Mafara LGA" said by Muhd Shehu (PPRO) Zamfara State Police Command. Subsequently, another banditry attack happened in August 2021 on College of Agriculture and Animal Science Bakura as reported by Sodiq (2021) at the time of the attack the bandits invaded the college premises with sophisticated rifles, through which they killed three gatemen and one police officer. They also kidnapped 15 students, a teacher and his wife. Four other staff were also abducted by the bandits, but three of them were rescued immediately after the incident as a result of extensive bush camping at the surrounding area by the tactical police operatives who were alerted and responded to the scene immediately.



The menace of banditry activities does not restrict to Zamfara state alone. But rather, it penetrates to other neighboring states. For instance, in the report of Maishanu (2020), the gunmen had attacked Government Science Secondary School Kankara at about 11:00pm on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2020. They thereafter went away with about over 300 schoolboys and injured one police officer in the incident. In same Katsina state but in different attacks bandit kidnapped 11 Islamiyya pupils and their teacher in Tsayau village and kidnapped other Islamiyya pupils in Sakkai village in Jibia and Faskari Local Governments respectively (Bello 2022). Katsina state Police Spokeman Gambo Isah confirmed the stories. In Kebbi state there was a banditry attack on Federal Government College Yauri according to the report the gunmen entered the school around 12:30pm and began shoot sporadically, they were able to kidnapped about thirty 30 schoolgirls, killed one policeman, destroyed a car of one staff and went away with ₦100,000. In neighboring Niger state, it has been reported that about 200 Islamiyya pupils were abducted at Tegin, Rafi Local Government. The abduction followed an attack on Tegin town in the early hours of Sunday 29 May, 2021 (Daily Trust 2021).

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the extent of English language syllabus coverage amid banditry activities in junior secondary schools in Zamfara state.
2. Determine the English language evaluation strategies amid banditry activities in junior secondary schools in Zamfara state.

### **Research Question**

1. What is the extent of English language syllabus coverage amid banditry activities in junior secondary schools in Zamfara state?
2. What are the English language evaluation strategies amid banditry activities in junior secondary schools in Zamfara state?

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference in the English Language syllabus coverage amid banditry activities in junior secondary schools in Zamfara State.
2. There is no significant difference in the English language evaluation strategies amid banditry activities in junior secondary schools in Zamfara state.

### **Methodology**

The research design used for this study is descriptive survey research method, meant to seek data on the impact of banditry activities on teaching and learning English language in junior secondary schools of Zamfara state. The population of the study is six hundred and sixty-seven (667) which drawn from 182 junior secondary schools in Zamfara state. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample size of 481 respondents, this is based on the recommendation of research advisor (2006) table for determining sample size from a given population.

A 20-item questionnaire was formulated through extensive literature review. It was structured in four (4) points Likert rating scale, thus; Strongly Agree (SA). Agree (A) Disagree (D) strongly disagree (DS). Copies of the initial draft were given to 3 experts in the department of



Educational Foundation, Federal University Gusau, to vet both the reliability and validity of the instrument. The suggestions and comments of these expert were noted and effected. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, and the result obtained from the data analysis was 0.89 which implies that the instrument was reliable for this study. Data collected from the field was subjected to statistical analysis for appropriate interpretation to achieve the set objectives of the study. Frequencies and Mean statistics had been used to answer the research questions while Chi-square statistical tool was used to test the null hypotheses of the study.

## Results

### Research Question 1

What is the extent of English language syllabus coverage amid banditry activities in junior secondary schools in Zamfara state?

**Table 1: Mean scores of the opinions of English teachers on the extent of Syllabus Coverage amid Banditry Activities (Cut-off Point =2.5)**

S/N	Item	Mean
	English Language syllabus are covered fully	2.05
	Frequency school closure due to banditry attacks has impact on syllabus coverage	1.92
	Teachers do not relent in attending school and perform their work	1.50
	Fear of banditry attacks contribute to students' decrease in school attendance	3.02
	Fear of banditry attacks make you uncomfortable to deliver the syllabus fully	2.94
	Parents do not hesitate to send their children to school due to fear of banditry attacks which may result in killing and kidnapping	1.80
	Government frequently shutdown schools to avoid subsequent attacks	3.59
	Government shares relevant textbooks for students to read at home in order to complement what is missed in school	1.81
	You encourage your students to study at home, using multiple medium	2.09
	When schools are re-opened you rush to catch-up what is missed during school shutdown	2.56

**Source:** Data collected from the field

**Grand Mean= 2.33**

Data presented in Table 1 reveals that the opinions of English teachers on the extent of syllabus coverage in secondary schools of Zamfara State are negative. In other words, grand mean score of their responses (2.33) is lower than the cut-off Mean or mean threshold (2.5). This indicates that the teachers' responses to the items on the scale show low coverage of English syllabus.

### Research Question 2

What are the English language evaluation strategies amid banditry activities in junior secondary schools in Zamfara state?





**Table 2: Mean scores of the Opinions of English Teachers on the evaluation strategies amid Banditry Activities (Cut-off Point =2.5)**

S/N	Item	Mean
	Fearlessly your students visit anywhere in the community seeking for relevant information to answer assignment	1.80
	School closure contributes to teachers' inability to meet students and give them class work and homework	3.25
	Tension for banditry attacks does not prevent you to conduct test for your students	1.66
	School closure due to banditry attacks makes you unable to meet your students and organize remedial lessons for more improvement	2.16
	Fear of banditry attacks does not disturb your preparation for examination	1.75
	Due to fear of banditry attacks students of multiple neighboring schools are merged together during external examination, to minimize risk of banditry attacks	3.25
	Fear of banditry attacks does not prevent external examiners invigilators to come to your school	1.60
	Junior secondary leaving certificate (JSLC) examination is usually being shifted from its initial schedule due to prevailing attacks on schools by bandits	2.62
	Sometimes terminal examination are skipped or ignored due to closure of schools modern to avoid risk of banditry attack	3.12
	Fear of banditry attacks does not prevent you to over-stay in school marking tests and examinations	1.83

**Source:** Data collected from the field

**Grand Mean= 2.30**

Data presented in Table 1 reveals that the opinions of English teachers on the evaluation strategies amid banditry activities in secondary schools of Zamfara State are negative. In other words, grand mean score of their responses (2.30) is lower than the cut-off Mean or mean threshold (2.5). This indicates that the teachers' responses to the items on the scale show poor evaluation strategies amid banditry activities.

### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the English Language syllabus coverage amid banditry activities in junior secondary schools in Zamfara State.

**Table 3: Summary of Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) on extent of English Language Syllabus coverage amid banditry activities in Junior Secondary Schools in Zamfara state.**

Number	$X^2$ cal	$X^2$ crit	Df	P-value	Decision
413	132.6	126.4	413	0.00	Rejected

The analysis of the result in table 3 shows that the P-value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 alpha level of significance and the  $X^2$  calculated value of 132.6 which is less than the  $X^2$  critical value of 126.4 at df 413. This result indicates that the first null hypothesis which states that there is no significance difference in the English language syllabus coverage amid banditry activities in



Junior Secondary school in Zamfara state, is hereby rejected. This result implies that English language syllabus are not fully covered due to banditry activities in Zamfara state.

## Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the English language evaluation strategies amid banditry activities in junior secondary schools in Zamfara state.

**Table 4: Summary of chi-square ( $X^2$ ) on the English language evaluation strategies amid banditry activities in Junior Secondary Schools in Zamfara state.**

Number	$X^2$ cal	$X^2$ crit	Df	P-value	Decision
413	141.2	126.4	412	0.00	Rejected

The analysis of the result in table 4 shows that the p-value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 alpha level of significance and the  $X^2$  calculated value of 141.2 which is less than the  $X^2$  critical value of 126.4 at df 412. This result indicates that the second null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the English language evaluation strategies amid banditry activities in Junior Secondary School in Zamfara state, is hereby rejected. This result implies that evaluation strategies are not adequately performed due to banditry activities in Zamfara state.

## Discussion of Findings

The result of hypothesis 1 indicates that there is significant difference in the English language syllabus coverage amid banditry activities. This finding is in line with the finding of Yahuza (2021) curriculum delivery is bedeviled with security challenges; workload of teachers; implementation of new curriculum; shortage of instructional resources; in-service training and governmental support. He further described security challenge as an awesome that pose a grave threat to educational system in Nigeria and also a threat to Nigeria's stability, economy and human survival. With fear of this threat teachers could not be able to cover the syllabus of their classes.

The result of hypothesis 2 indicates that there is significant difference in English language evaluation strategies mid banditry activities. This finding corresponds with the finding of Yahuza (2021) who pointed out that one of the major consequences of insecurity is the destruction of social life through targeted attacks on public places including schools. Schools have become favourite target of attacks by bandits, kidnappers, militant groups and other criminals. In recent times direct attacks on schools by bandits has result in killings and destruction of school buildings and learning materials. Schools are becoming increasingly vulnerable to banditry attacks which put teachers and students on serious fear. With this fear teachers and examination bodies could not pay much attention to evaluate the performance of their students effectively.

## Conclusion

Sequel to the finding of this study, it is concluded that banditry activities have become a great phenomenon that hinders effective curriculum delivery and syllabus coverage. The study also revealed that due to threat of banditry activities in the state, teachers and examination bodies find it difficult if not impossible to evaluate the contents they managed to have been taught.



### Recommendations

1. Government should take all necessary measures to control all acts of insurgency; public enlightenment/awareness against banditry should be intensified at all levels.
2. School Authorities should ensure that security outfits are adequately deployed to school environments before and during examinations to enable the students write and concentrate On their assessment.

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