

## Social Characteristics and Perception of Terrorism in Borno State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This paper investigates public perception on the influence of terrorism in North East-Nigeria. Survey design was adopted with a total sample of one hundred and eighty (180) from three local government areas of Borno State (Maiduguri, Gambia and Ngala) using convenient sampling technique. Questionnaire was developed by the researcher and pilot study was conducted to affirm validity and reliability. Four hypotheses were stated and tested with Independent t-test. The study found that males and females differ significantly in their perception on the influence of terrorism in the north-eastern Nigeria. The study further confirmed that Christians and Muslims indicated a statistically significant difference in their perception on the influence of terrorism in the North-East Nigeria. On the contrary the study does not confirmed that old and young respondents do not statistically significantly difference in their perception on the influence of terrorism in the north-east of Nigeria. Finally, a statistical significant difference is established on the perception of the influence of terrorism in the north-east Nigeria between people of low and high educational status. The study concludes that there is a negative perception of the public towards terrorism in the north-east Nigeria. Thus recommends that both the States and Federal governments should embark on counter-terrorism strategies that will involve increase adequate policing and timely intelligence acquisition.*

**Keywords:** Social, Characteristics, Perception and Terrorism.

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### Introduction

Indeed, the worldwide manifestation of terrorism and insurgency has been evident not only in Africa, but also in Nigeria. With particular reference to Nigeria, the phenomenon has found expression in the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency since the year 2001. And since its advent, the sectarian insurgency has wrecked immense havoc in the country, especially by explosive and fire arms with gruesome, fatal consequence (Awake, 2006). Awake (2006) further stressed that the ugly face of Boko Haram insurgency has stampede and brought set back to Nigerian psychologically, socially, economically and politically, especially in North-Eastern Nigeria particularly Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States.

Undoubtedly, terrorism and insurgency are globally becoming a household word as there is no nation that is completely an exception from its devastating effect. Accordingly, Rourke (2008) observed and perceived that war, terrorism and other forms of transnational political violence are in many ways more threatening today than ever before as casualties have been on increase. It is however difficult to evolve a single definition for the term “terrorism”. The difficulty emanates from the lack of consensus or unified perspective among nations or scholars as to what could be regarded as terrorist act. Hence, terrorism has been described variously as both a tactic and strategy; a crime and a holy duty; a justified reaction to oppression and inexcusable abomination since it is a function of whose point of view is being represented (Awake, 2006).

The alarming level of terrorists' attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria and in different parts of the Country has left unpalatable consequences for the nation's socio-economic and political development (Ewatan, 2013). To address the threats to national security and combat the increasing waves of crimes, the Federal Government of Nigeria in the 2013 Budget made a huge allocation to security, and the National Assembly passed the anti-terrorism act in 2011 (Ewatan, 2013). In April 2018, President Muhammadu Buhari gave approval for the purchase of more equipment for the military, worth \$1 billion. This was revealed Wednesday 15th April by the Minister of Defence, Mansur Dan Ali, while speaking with journalists at the end of a security meeting chaired by the president (Premium Times, June 2019).

Despite, the plethora of security measures taken to address the daunting challenges of terrorism and insecurity in Nigeria, the government efforts have not produced adequate and the desired positive result. This has compelled the Nigerian government in recent time to request for foreign assistance from countries such as United States of America, Israel, and European Union countries to combat the rising waves of terrorism and insurgency. Amidst the deteriorating security situation in the country, Nigeria is also confronted with daunting social, economic and political developmental challenges. These developmental challenges include endemic rural and urban poverty, high rate of unemployment, debilitating youth unemployment, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, inadequate social and physical infrastructure, very large domestic debt, and rising stock of external debt (Ewatan, 2013).

Some scholars in conceptualizing security, placed emphasis on the absence of threat to peace, stability, national cohesion, political and socio-economic objectives of a

country (Igbuzor, 2011; Oche, 2001; Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013). Thus there is a general consensus in the contemporary literature that security is vital for national cohesion, peace and sustainable development in all ramifications. According to Oladeji and Folorunso (2007), it is apparent that national security is a desideratum, sine qua non for economic growth and development of any country. They further posited that the areas affected by Boko Haram insurgency have been devoid of virtually all economic activities. In the intelligence community there is a consensus that security is not the absence of threats or security issues, but the existence of a robust mechanism to respond proactively to the challenges posed by these threats with expediency, expertise, and in real time (Oladeji & Folorunso, 2007).

The perception of the public toward terrorism has been seen to have affected Nigeria political, economic and social insecurity of which encompasses all developmental goals and issues being the root of the issue and the solution. Addressing issues of terrorism is crucial in order to execute successful developmental projects. As a goal, it is believed that every country should aspire to reach a point of security by protecting its citizens from structural violence, crime and social insecurity. Indeed, without the safety of citizens, all plans for development, whether economic, political or social, will definitely fail (Ewetan, 2013). Terrorism is a phenomenon that is bedevilling Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States, and affects their policies and development. Any nation striving towards development must reduce the frequency of crime to the barest minimum (Awake, 2006).

Terrorism is the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear for bringing about political change. All terrorist acts involve the use of violence. These acts are committed to non- state armed actors. Terrorists attempt not only to sow panic but also to undermine confidence in the government and political leadership of their target area. Terrorism is therefore designed to have psychological effects that reach far beyond its impact on the immediate victims or object of an attack. Accordingly, Okoli (2014) posited that terrorism is one of the major challenges facing education, most especially for females and people of tender age as they perceive terrorism more dangerous (Okoli, 2014). Okoli (2014) further pointed out that the negative influence of terrorism is perceived and viewed more obvious in people of low educational and economic status than their higher educational and economic counterparts. In most cases, communities, under serious terrorists attack are devoid of school activities; sometimes the schools are either burnt or shut down.

Also, in many terrorist attacks, bread winners of some families are killed or sources of livelihood destroyed, leaving only the males to continue school while the females are mostly withdrawn due to insufficient funds. Ensuring that children have safe, secure environment in which to grow, learn and develop healthy brains and bodies is not only good for the children themselves, but also builds a strong foundation for thriving prosperous society. Science shows that exposure to circumstance that produce persistent fear and chronic anxiety can have lifelong consequences. Fear has potential to affect how children learn, solve problems and relate to others (Oladele, 2014). The nation Nigeria has witnessed brutal confrontation and massive assaults from terrorist group which is undoubtedly the most blood-thirsty and destructive in terms of demonic brutality, mindless savagery and flagrant disobedience to the principles of peace and stability. Nigeria has witnessed insurgency from this terrorist group called Boko Haram from 2001. There is unleashed terror and fear in the minds of every Nigerian. There is wanton destruction of government properties, bombing of churches, mosques and other public places, assassination of prominent individuals, burning of schools occasioned by sporadic shooting of citizens and even abduction of secondary school students in the case of Chibok girls in Borno and Dapchi girls in Yobe State. In Nigeria, what appears to be an act of terrorism can be traced to the October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 bomb blast at the Eagle Square in Abuja. According to Amaka (2014) terrorism today has taken a new dimension. According to her, Nigeria as a nation is now at the mercy of terrorist group known as Boko Haram. Just as it was planned in rapid succession between October 2010 till now, the nation has had countless explosions at different times to tell us that the issue of terrorism is very well alive with us and it has been affecting many lives, social, political, economic, and educational development of Nigeria (Amaka, 2014).

Abadie (2006) conducted a study to find out the causes and the influence of terrorism on the socio-economic and political development. He found that terrorism is attributed to high rate of poverty and low educational status in which case, poverty accounted for 66% while low educational status accounted for 57.6%. He further found that, the 66% level of poverty negatively influence economic development by 70.4%, and negatively influence political development by 49%. Similarly, Bravo and Davis (2006) conducted a study to find out the causes and the influence of terrorism on the socio-economic and political development, and found that terrorism in some ways is a rebellion against government due to inequality in political and economic power sharing. They found that political inequality in terms of power sharing accounted for 61%, while economic power sharing accounted for 68%. In the empirical study, it was also found that inequality in political power

sharing negatively influenced the socio-economic development by 75%, while the inequality in economic power negatively influenced the socio-economic and political development by 68.7%.

In the same vein, Krueger and Maleckova (2003) conducted a study with regard to the causes and negative consequences of terrorism on the socio-economic and political development and found that terrorism is attributed to high rate of unemployment and religion. In the study, unemployment accounted for 77.5% while religion accounted for 73.4% respectively. The 77.5% level of unemployment has negative influence on social development by 66%, has negative influence on economic development by 60%, and has negative influence on political development by 52.3%. Also, the 73.4% level of religious problems accounted for 50% negative influence on social development, 49% negative influence on economic development, and 55% negative influence on political development.

Studies by Amaka (2004) found that democracy has both positive and negative relationship with terrorism. This is because of the fact that there are more opportunities for an individual or group to express their political goals through the process of government. On the other hand, government oppression increases the likelihood of being frustrated with the lack of opportunity to participate. It was empirically found that, opportunities to participate accounted for 45% positive development socially, economically and politically while government oppression accounted for 47% negative development socially, economically and politically. In another study conducted by Krueger and Maleckova (2003), it was found that terrorism is a dilemma with the lack of civil rights and supports and said that terrorism is a political and not economic problem, but affects any society both politically and economically.

In a study conducted by Piazza (2007), it was found that terrorism reduces social, economic and political efficiency and performance. Piazza (2008) also found that analysis of the promotion of democracy and free market economics is not a solution to terrorism. It is empirically revealed that a more liberal political system is the more susceptible to the threat of terrorism than a dictatorial regime. Eubank and Weinberg (1994) empirically found that hood of terrorist groups occurring in democracies is three and half times greater than occurring in non-democracies and the negative effect reduces social, economic and political development by 58.8%.

Heymann (2002) conducted a study and found out that terrorism has much negative influence on educational development and also devoid foreign policy and

transnational market. He empirically found that burning or shutting down of schools as a result of terrorists attack accounted for social, economic and political imbalance by 51% and absence of foreign exchange and transnational market accounted for economic instability by 53.5%.

The objective of this study is to assess the gender, religious, ages and educational status differences of the public perception on the influence of terrorism in the North East of Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

This research adopted descriptive survey research approach. This design is suitable because the study attempted a survey and description of the social characteristics and perception of terrorism variables being investigated have already occurred and the researcher is only interested in knowing the influence of the predictor variable without necessarily manipulating any of the variables.

A total number of 180 participants were drawn from three Local Government Areas of Borno State that Boko Haram attacks are much prevalent. Out of the 180, 162 questionnaires were correctly filled and submitted. The participants consisted of 77 males and 85 females. Out of which, 62 participants were drawn from Maiduguri local government, consisting of 27 males and 35 females. 50 participants were drawn from Gambaru - Ngala Local Government, consisting of 25 males and 25 females. Similarly, 50 participants were drawn from Bama Local Government, consisting of 25 males and 25 females. All the participants drawn were within the age range of 20-60 years. The participants included both married and single members of the public.

The questionnaire was developed by the researcher and validated by pilot test. The purpose is to measure the public perception on the influence of terrorism in the North-Eastern Nigeria. The questionnaire consists of two sections: Section "A" of the questionnaire was used to elicit the socio-demographic data of participants, such as age, gender, religious affiliation, ethnic group, place of work, marital status and educational background. Section "B" sought to get information from the participants on the public perception on the influence of terrorism in the North-Eastern Nigeria. Section "B" of the questionnaire contains twenty items and each item was followed by four response options; strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. Strongly agree was scored =4, agree was scored = 3, disagree was scored = 2, strongly disagree was scored = 1. Both strongly agree and agree are indications that public perception on the influence of terrorism in the North

Eastern Nigeria is positive. While both disagree and strongly disagree are indications that public perception on the influence of terrorism in the North East is negative.

### **Ethical Procedures**

Official permission and consent were sought from the participants and the relevant authorities and approval obtained prior to any data collection in this research. The participants who agreed to participate initially read a plain language statement detailing the study and the requirements of their participation should they choose to participate. The participants who willingly agreed to participate were given the questionnaire and were encouraged to read the instructions carefully before responding to the items/statements in section 'B' of the questionnaire, by ticking one of the options 1,2,3,4, on the right hand side of the statement to indicate how they feel or perceive the public influence on terrorism in the north-eastern Nigeria. The participants were assured that their privacy are protected and confidentiality was highly maintained.

The data collected in this study were analyzed with frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations to explain the characteristics of the participants. While the inferential statistics Independent Sample t-test was used for the test of significance of the hypotheses, to assess the difference in the public perception of the study variables.

### **Result and Discussion**

#### **Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis One:** stated that there will be a significant difference between males and females in their public perception on the influence of terrorism in the North East of Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested using Independent-sample t-test in Table 1

**Table 1: Mean Difference of Males and Females Perception of the Influence of Terrorism in the North-east Nigeria**

Variables	N	M	SD	df	t-test	Sig.
Male	77	62.81	14.623			
				160	1.477	0.142
Female	85	59.47	14.107			

**Sig. level = 0.05**

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation scores between male and female perception of terrorism of the north-east Nigeria, where male (M= 62.81, SD= 14.623) and female (M= 59.47, SD= 14.107). The results further indicated that males and females did not statistically significantly difference in their perception on the influence of terrorism of the north-east Nigeria  $t(160) = 1.477, P > .05$ . In other words, the hypothesis was not confirmed in this study.

**Hypothesis Two:** stated that, there will be a significant difference between Christians and Muslims in their public perception on the influence of terrorism in the North East of Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested using Independent-sample t-test in Table 2

**Table 3: Mean Difference of Christians and Muslims Perception of the Influence of Terrorism in the North-East of Nigeria**

Variables	N	M	SD	df	t-test	Sig.
Christian	94	65.11	15.124			
				160	4.446	0.000
Muslim	68	55.46	11.244			

**Sig. level = 0.05**

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation scores between Christians and Muslims perception on the influence of terrorism in the north-east of Nigeria;

where Christian (M= 65.11, SD= 15.124) and Muslim (M= 55.46, SD= 11.244). Further analysis revealed that, Christians and Muslims indicated a statistically significantly difference in their perception on the influence of terrorism in the north-east Nigeria  $t(160) = 4.446, P < .05$ . In other words, the hypothesis was confirmed in this study.

**Hypothesis Three:** stated that, there will be a significant difference between old and young in their perception on the influence of terrorism in the North East of Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested using Independent-sample t-test in Table 3.

**Table 4: Mean Difference of Old and Young in their Perception of the Influence of Terrorism in the North-east Nigeria**

Variables	N	M	SD	df	t-test	Sig.
Old	67	63.43	13.982			
				160	-1.775	0.078
Young	95	59.38	14.539			

**Sig. level = 0.05**

Table 4 presents the mean and standard deviation scores between old and young in their perception of terrorism in the north-east of Nigeria, where old respondents indicated a mean of 65.11 and standard deviation of 15.124. While the young respondents indicated a mean of 55.46 and standard deviation of 11.244. Further analysis revealed that, old and young respondents do not statistically significantly differed in their perception on the influence of terrorism in the north-east of Nigeria  $t(160) = -1.775, P > .05$ . In other words, the hypothesis was not confirmed in this study.

**Hypothesis Four:** stated that there will be a significant difference between people of low educational status and people of high educational status in their perception on the influence of terrorism in the North East of Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested using Independent-sample t-test in Table 4.

**Table 4: Mean Difference of People of Low and High Educational Status Perception of the Influence of Terrorism in North-East of Nigeria**

Variables	N	M	SD	df	t-test	Sig.
Low Education	53	53.74	9.948			
High Education	109	64.61	14.923	160	-4.809	0.000

**Sig. level = 0.05**

Table 4 presents the mean and standard deviation scores between People of low and high educational status' perception on the influence of terrorism in the north-eastern Nigeria; where people of low education (M= 53.74, SD= 9.948) and people of high education (M= 64.61, SD= 14.923). Further analysis revealed a statistically significantly difference  $t(160) = -4.809, P < .05$  in the perception on the influence of terrorism in the north-east Nigeria between people of low and high educational status. In other words, the hypothesis was confirmed in this study.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The result of this research revealed that, there is a negative public perception on the influence of terrorism in the North East of Nigeria. This result supports the finding of Oladele (2014). Accordingly, Oladele (2014) pointed out that, there is wanton destruction of government properties, bombing of churches, mosques and other public places, assassinating of prominent individuals, burning of schools occasioned by sporadic shooting of citizens, and even abduction of secondary school students in the case of Chibok girls in Borno and Depchi girls in Yobe state.

Similarly, the result of this research supports the earlier finding of Amaka (2014). According to her, Nigeria as a nation is now at the mercy of terrorist group known as Boko Haram. Just as it was planned in rapid succession between October 2010 till date, the nation has had countless exploitations at different times to tell us that the issue of terrorism is very well alive with us and it has been affecting many lives, social political, economic and educational development of Nigeria .

The first hypothesis in this study does not receive confirmation as it showed statistically in significant result between males and females in their perception of the influence of terrorism in the North East of Nigeria. The finding of this study

supports the earlier finding of Oladele (2014). According to him, the nation has witnessed brutal confirmation and massive assaults from terrorist group which is undoubtedly the most blood-thirsty and destructive in terms of demonic brutality, mindless savagery and flagrant disobedience to principles of peace and stability. And that, the influence is perceived as severe to both gender. However, literature has not shown anywhere that this result contradicts any earlier study.

The plausible explanation for this insignificant difference between males and female in their public perception of the influence of terrorism in North-Eastern Nigeria may be that, both genders as humans, may have in one way or the other experienced the devastating effect of terrorism in the same magnitude. The plausible explanation for this insignificant difference between males and females in their perception of the influence of terrorism in north east may also be that, terrorism is like two edged sword, and as such, does not spare any gender in any way. Therefore, the effect may be felt in almost the same way.

The second hypothesis in this study received confirmation as there is statistically significant difference between Christians and Muslims in their perception of the influence of terrorism in north eastern Nigerian. The finding of this study supports the earlier study of (Maregenere, 2011; Obasi, 2009). Accordingly, they said, religion has been perceived and has been serving and is still serving as an institution or instrument of sustainable peace and social harmony in many developing and developed countries. However, religion has also been serving as a motivation for violence and terrorism. No wonder religion has been regarded as “double edged sword”. And that religion and its influence has been perceived significantly across religions.

Similarly, the result of this study supports the earlier study of Reynal-Quero (2002). He discovered that nations that are divided along religious lines are often more prone to intense and prolonged terrorism than the nations that are divided by political territorial and ethnic differences. The extrapolations from this are that religion has influence on terrorism and terrorism has influence on religion. In other words, it has been perceived/viewed that there is a link between terrorism and religion. And that the two major religions have different perception for the influence. However, the result of this present study has not contradicted any earlier study.

The plausible explanation for this significant difference between Christians and Muslims in their perception of the influence of terrorism in the North Eastern

Nigeria may be that the two religions have different orientation, teaching and belief. Therefore, they may have different perception with regard to their perception on the influence of terrorism. The plausible explanation for this significant difference between Christians and Muslims in their perception on the influence of terrorism in the North Eastern Nigeria, may also be that the two religions are different in terms of engaging in the act of terrorism, and as such may have different perception with regard to the influence on socio-economic and political development.

The third hypothesis in this study does not receive confirmation as there is statistically insignificant difference between old and young in their perception on the influence of terrorism in north eastern Nigeria. The result of this study contradicts the earlier study of Okoli (2014). According to Okoli (2014), terrorism is therefore designed to have psychological effects that reach far beyond its impact on the immediate victims or object of an attack. Accordingly, Okoli(2014) posited that terrorism is one of the major challenges facing education, economic and political development most especially for people of tender age as they perceive terrorism to be more dangerous. However, in the earlier research, the young people had higher perception on the influence of terrorism in the North East, while in the present research; there is no statistical difference between old and young in their perception of the influence of terrorism in the North East.

This insignificant difference between old and young in their perception on the influence of terrorism in the North Eastern Nigeria may be that the act of terrorism is like death that has no respect/regard for anybody's life and may claim the lives of both old and young in almost the same way. Therefore, there may be no age difference in their perception of its influence.

The plausible explanation for this insignificant difference between old and young in their perception of the influence of terrorism in the North East may also be that the act of terrorism has destroyed social and economic lives of both the old and young, and as such they may have the same level of perception.

The fourth hypothesis in this study was confirmed as there is statistically significant difference between people of low educational status and people of high educational status in their perception of the influence of terrorism on socioeconomic and political development of north eastern Nigeria. The finding of this research in a way supports the earlier finding of Okoli (2014). Okoli (2014) pointed out that the negative influence of terrorism is perceived and viewed more obvious in people of low educational and economic status than their higher educational and economic

counterparts. In the earlier study of Okoli (2014), the people of low educational status had higher perception of the influence of terrorism on socio-economic and political development, while the present study demonstrated that, the people of higher educational status had higher perception of the influence of terrorism on socio-economic and political development. The most important thing is, there is difference in the perception.

This significant difference between people of low educational status and people of high educational status in their perception on the influence of terrorism in the North Eastern Nigeria may be that people of high educational status, being experienced and versatile, may have the ability to predict future's influence on terrorism than their lower counterparts. Therefore, both present and future influence of terrorism may be felt in greater magnitude by the people of high educational status than people of low educational status.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The perception of the public toward insurgency in the north- east Nigeria has been a negative because of the psychological issues it has caused people in the region. Despite, the plethora of security measures taken to address the daunting challenges of terrorism and insecurity in Nigeria, the government efforts have not produced adequate and the desired positive result. Amidst the deteriorating security situation in the country, Nigeria is also confronted with daunting social, economic and political developmental challenges. These developmental challenges include endemic rural and urban poverty, high rate of unemployment, debilitating youth unemployment, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, inadequate social and physical infrastructure, very large domestic debt, and rising stock of external debt. The study recommends that:

1. Both the States and Federal governments should embark on counter-terrorism strategies that will involve an increase in adequate policing and timely intelligence acquisition.
2. Measures should be adequately put in place to incorporate the military tactics, techniques and strategy that the governments, military, law enforcement and intelligence agencies can use to combat or prevent terrorism.
3. The government should use foreign defence programs that support other countries attempts to suppress insurgency, lawlessness, or subversion or to reduce the conditions on which these threats to security may develop.

4. Government should ensure mass surveillance of the national population. Home grown terrorist especially lone wolves are often harder to detect because of their citizenship or legal status and ability to stay under the radar. In order to curb that, appropriate government organizations need to understand the sources, motivational methods of preparation and tactics of terrorist groups.
5. The Federal government should adequately engage the use of financial tracking to unveil money transfers which may be sources of sponsorship for terrorism.

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