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Implementation of Geography Curriculum and the Impacts of Boko Haram Insurgency in Some Secondary Schools of Selected Local Government Areas of Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of Boko Haram insurgency on the implementation of the Geography Curriculum in secondary schools in Borno State, Nigeria. It focuses on how violence disrupts education through instability, psychological distress, and infrastructural damage. Using a descriptive survey method, the research involved 180 participants, including 20 geography teachers and 160 senior secondary students from 16 selected public schools. Data was gathered through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, and analyzed with descriptive statistics. The outcome reveals that, 79.20% of teachers confirmed coverage of 25 fundamental themes in the geography curriculum at senior secondary schools in Borno State, according to 160 geography teachers' responses, with a cumulative frequency of 3,291. Insufficient coverage was reported by 17% of the teachers, with a cumulative frequency of 705 cases. Significantly, the least amount of discussion was given to themes pertaining to Geographic Information Systems (GIS), satellite remote sensing (SRS), and GIS applications. This suggests that, despite continued insurgency activity, teachers may find it difficult to obtain authentic source materials for effective instruction. Instructors noted a move away from hands-on learning strategies, with none using field observations, demonstrations, or discussions in favor of the more conventional chalk-talk method. This concentration on simpler teaching techniques is a result of insurgency-related reduced class sizes, safety concerns, and a lack of resources. GIS-related topics received the least attention, despite the majority of geography curriculum topics being covered. This is indicative of instructors' challenges in obtaining practical resources for efficient teaching. In conclusion, insurgency has adversely impacted the implementation of the senior secondary Geography curriculum in Borno State, Nigeria, resulting in poor teaching methods, limited field instructional materials, and low student achievements. This research recommends: enhancing security in schools, allowing parental consent for local fieldwork, hiring qualified teachers who can innovate in practical teaching, and replacing educational materials lost during insurgency to improve learning outcomes.

Keywords: Curriculum implementation, Geography, Impacts, Boko Haram Insurgency, School

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Introduction

According to research, the operations of the rebel group Boko Haram have resulted in protracted insecurity in the northern part of Nigeria in recent years. Numerous facets of life have been profoundly impacted by this rivalry, most notably the field of education. In addition to physical destruction and closures, schools in the impacted areas have also had to relocate teachers and students, which has interfered with the teaching and learning process. Given this, geography, a subject that calls for both theoretical knowledge and practical experience, faces significant obstacles in terms of curriculum delivery (Gasi *et al.*, 2025, and Mogbo *et al.*, 2021).

Geography is still a relevant subject for secondary school students' participation as educational institutions work to create learners fit for the twenty-first century. Students can develop civic consciousness and environmental awareness thanks to geography's interdisciplinary nature and emphasis on global learning (Collymore, 2019). According to Munazza (2016), geography is a science of relationships and is divided into two main categories: physical geography, which examines the various environmental factors and how they relate to people or society, and social geography, also known as human geography, which examines the same geographic relationships but from a different perspective—that is, the spatial distribution, social activities, and cultural achievements of humans.

The modern academic discipline of geography is rooted in ancient practices concerned with the characteristics of places, in particular their natural environments and people, as well as the inter relation between the two. Geography is generally conceived as a science of interrelationship between natural phenomena themselves and between humans and other natural phenomena, and the relationship between human societies. Today the discipline is not only concerned with descriptions but also with analysis as well as predictions (Gersmehl 2014). The subject also emphasizes on location, space association and changes of physical occurrences on the surface of the earth; it focuses on the interrelationship among occurrences on the earth surface and those in the atmosphere based on stated objectives (Mogbo *et al.*, 2021). The main emphasis of geography is the physical and human or cultural phenomena on earth. It lays emphasis on people, places, and occurrences as they occur in particular forms and as they change in a process in any surrounding. Moreover, the knowledge of geography has been meaningfully linked to national integration and infrastructural development of every developed nation it has been discovered in repeated studies that geography education has a direct effect on the national integration and infrastructural development of a nation (Olaniyi and Oladokun, 2021).

Problem Statement/ Justification of the Study

The impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on the North-East region of Nigeria has been widespread and devastating, touching every sector of society. Among the sectors most affected is education, a critical pillar for national development. Schools have been burned, students and teachers attacked, and the entire learning environment destabilized. While numerous studies have highlighted the general consequences of insurgency on education, limited attention has been paid to how specific subjects, like geography, have been affected in particular localities. In Askira/Uba, Gwoza, Bama, and Dikwa, Local Government Areas of Borno State, schools have faced persistent threats ranging from direct attacks to indirect effects such as population displacement, economic hardship, and psychological trauma. Schools in the area continue to struggle with incomplete curriculum coverage, limited fieldwork opportunities, and overstretched teachers who operate under tense and insecure conditions.

One of the overlooked consequences of the insurgency is its psychological impact on children and their ability to learn. Without proper support, children exposed to conflict suffer long-term trauma, diminished concentration, and weakened school performance (Bloom and Matfess, 2016). This has significant implications for their educational attainment, especially in a subject like geography that requires active engagement, reasoning, and spatial thinking. This study explores how the implementation of the geography curriculum has been disrupted by insurgency-related challenges. It also assess adequacy of teaching materials, instructional methods, and how these factors influence student achievement in geography.

By focusing on Askira/Uba, Gwoza, Bama, and Dikwa, are community navigating both threat and resilience, this research hopes to contribute meaningful insights into improving subject-based curriculum implementation in conflict zones, and furthermore these attacks have forced the state government to close down schools for prolonged periods from March 2014 to September 2015. This is made worse as several thousands of people have migrated swiftly to other parts of Nigeria during the insurgency.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to explore the impact of Boko haram insurgency on the implementation of Geography curriculum in senior secondary schools in Borno State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Assess the Extent of Coverage of Senior Secondary School Geography Curriculum implementation in four (4) LGAs of Borno State as a result of the insurgency.
2. Determine the Effects of Insurgency on Methods of Teaching Geography curriculum resources in the study area.
3. Investigate Geography Students' Achievement in the 2022 WASSCE in Sampled Schools of 4 LGAs

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

Analyzing the disruptions caused by insecurity, a lack of infrastructure, and psychological distress is necessary when implementing curricula in conflict areas. Nigerian geography curricula emphasize civic awareness, spatial dynamics, and environmental interrelationships—all of which rely on fieldwork opportunities and classroom stability (Collymore, 2013; Gersmehl, 2014). Geography education emphasizes spatial thinking and environmental interaction, integrating both physical and human aspects of place (Munazza, 2016; Mogbo *et al.*, 2021). It is instrumental in promoting national integration and global citizenship (Olaniyi and Oladokun, 2021). Ofongo (2023) conducted a research on the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria: What could have been the causes and precursors? The study critically examined plausible explanations for the emergence of the Boko Haram conflict.

Indeed, there are several underlining factors that led to the emergence and radicalization of the sect. In particular factors as poverty, unemployment and illiteracy are shown to have been responsible for the radicalization of ethnic and religious identities in the country. Boko Haram Insurgency and Educational Disruption Boko Haram's campaign, rooted in rejecting Western values and education, has directly targeted schools, students, and teachers (Mohammed, 2024). This ideological violence results in destruction of school infrastructure, teacher displacement, and fear among students—conditions that severely hinder curriculum implementation (Ofongo, 2016). Children exposed to terrorism often suffer long-term psychological consequences such as trauma, poor concentration, and underachievement (Bloom and Matfess, 2016). However, in Borno State, especially in southern part, secondary schools struggle to maintain curriculum delivery under the strain of persistent violence and displacement.

Environmental and Security Challenges in Learning

Environmental hazards such as flooding, combined with poor school infrastructure, also contribute to an unconducive learning environment. Mohammed (2024), noted that areas hit by Boko Haram suffer from both man-made and natural disasters, creating dual layers of vulnerability. Nwachukwu and Onwukwe (2024), found that safety, cleanliness, and a peaceful environment significantly affect academic performance. Insecure school locations lead to increased absenteeism, teacher attrition, and ultimately, diminished learning outcomes.

Curriculum Challenges in Conflict Zones

The geography curriculum requires teacher competency, sufficient resources, and access to practical experiences. In conflict areas like Bui, schools face teacher shortages, limited access to teaching aids, and reduced curriculum coverage due to shortened school terms (Hussaini, 2024). Practical lessons such as fieldwork are often skipped, limiting student comprehension and engagement. Empirical Evidence from Nigeria and Beyond Several Nigerian and global studies affirm that conflict zones suffer similar setbacks in education. In Port Harcourt and Owerri, studies link environmental disruption to lower academic achievement (Nwachukwu and Onwukwe, 2024; Ojukwu and Nwanna, 2015). Globally, UNESCO reports confirm that education in emergencies is one of the least funded sectors, leaving students in conflict zones without essential support. The Texas Education Agency (2024) emphasizes the importance of spatial reasoning, environmental analysis, and cultural interpretation in geography. These outcomes are hard to achieve in conflict zones where students may not even attend school regularly.

Theoretical Perspectives Environmental Hazard Theory suggests that a disrupted man-machine-environment system leads to adverse educational outcomes. In Borno, where insecurity disrupts both physical and psychological school systems, these hazards significantly reduce teaching efficacy and learning engagement (Abahussain, 2022; Schwab, 2018). Social Vulnerability Theory also explains how inequalities—economic, gender-based, infrastructural—exacerbate the impact of conflict on education. Communities with lower resilience, due to poverty or marginalization, suffer more intensely from educational breakdowns (Musnad, 2004; Mohammed, 2024). Community Resilience and Recovery Efforts While vulnerability is widespread, some communities demonstrate resilience by rebuilding schools, supporting displaced learners, and incorporating psychosocial interventions (Campanella, 2015; Enarson, 2007). These communities often leverage external aid and strong local networks to mitigate the impact of insurgency.

However some international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) have adopted a very similar approach to countering violent extremism (CVE) programs: community representatives get together to discuss the local drivers of extremism and identify the interventions, including rehabilitation and reintegration of former Boko Haram members (Breckenmacher, 2019).

Materials and Method

This section explains the various techniques that the researcher adopted in the processes of the work. In Askira/Uba, Gwoza, Bama, and Dikwa, Local Government Areas of Borno State. Research Design This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The approach is suitable for assessing opinions, behaviours, and experiences related to the implementation of the geography curriculum in a conflict-affected area. This was because data was collected from a sample of Geography teachers and records of students' academic achievement in the study area using Teachers' Questionnaire on the Impact of Insurgency on the Implementation of Geography Curriculum (TQIIIGC) and Students' Geography Achievement Test (SGAT) respectively during the study.

Sampling and Study Population

The population of the study included all secondary school geography teachers and senior secondary students (SS SS III) in public schools in four (4) Local Government Areas of Borno State. A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting four (4) public secondary schools that teach geography subject. Thus, data for the study was collected from the entire population of geography teachers in the 4 public schools and the senior secondary three (SSIII) students who wrote WASSCE in 2022. Within these schools, 20 geography teachers and 160 SSIII students were randomly sampled. The total sample size is 180 respondents.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data was collected using two instruments:

1. A structured questionnaire titled Geography Curriculum Implementation and Conflict Impact Questionnaire (GCICIQ), used as interview guide for geography teachers and results of students' West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) for school candidates for the year 2022. The questionnaire was named Teachers' Questionnaire on the Impact of Insurgency on the Implementation of Geography Curriculum (TQIIIGC).
2. Students' achievement was measured using WASSCE result for the year 2022 selected randomly from public schools. The GCICIQ had 15 items, divided into sections A, B, and C. Section A intended for collection of data on bio data of the teachers, section B contained a checklist of 25 topics in the NERDC Geography curriculum, while sections C was on methods of teaching. The items in section B had two checkboxes, 'Covered' and 'Not Covered'. While sections C, had items quoted on a four-point Likert type scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) with ratings 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively and criterion mean of 2.50. The WASSCE results for 2022 duly signed by WAEC Officials and documented by the schools was obtained and used as measure of the students' achievement in Geography subject. The results were graded A1, B2, B3, C4, C5, C6, D7, E8 and F9, A1 being the highest obtainable grade while F9 is the lowest grade. Grades A1, B2, B3, C4, C5 and C6 were considered in the study as pass, while grades D7, E8 and F9 were considered fail.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through direct visits to the schools where the GCICIQ Questionnaires were administered to directly to the 160 Geography teachers in the study area, and interviews granted with teachers for qualitative insights. The questionnaire was administered and retrieved on-the-spot after completion. The researcher supervised the exercise foster clarification when needed. Retrieved questionnaires were assembled and analyzed by the researcher. Furthermore, the WASSCE results which were duly signed and documented by the sampled schools were used as a measure of the students' achievement in Geography.

Experts in curriculum studies and educational measurement reviewed the instruments for content validity. Three experts validated the content of the GCICIQ. Two of the experts were from Geography Education and one from Test, Measurements and Evaluation. The reliability coefficient of the GCICIQ was 0.79, computed using Cronbach Alpha method from data collected in a pilot study conducted in a neighboring LGA yielded a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.82, indicating good reliability.

Statistical Analysis Frequency, percentage and mean were used to analyse the quantitative data collected for the study. Thus, frequency, percentage and mean score were used to give answers to the objectives, and the use of likert rating scale.

Result and Discussion

This research work is expected to find out the impact of boko haram insurgency on geography curriculum implementation in selected secondary schools one in each local government area these are Askira/Uba, Gwoza, Bama, and Dikwa, of Borno State, Nigeria and the analysis of the study will find an insight to solve the problem. Results of this work are presented based on the objectives of the study in this section as follows:

Impact insurgency activity on Geography teachers' coverage of Geography curriculum content in the secondary schools

This was intended to investigate the extent to which insurgency affect the coverage of Geography curriculum in Maiduguri, Borno State and the results are presented in table 1. The result presented in Table 1 is the responses of 160 Geography teachers on the coverage of 25 basic topics of Geography curriculum content in the senior secondary schools of Askira/Uba, Bama, Dikwa, and Gwoza Local Government Areas of Borno State. The result shows that nearly all the teachers affirmed to have covered the topics with a cumulative frequency count of 3,291 representing 79.20%), while a minority of the teachers with a cumulative frequency of 705 representing 17% have not covered the content. The report shows that most of the teachers have not covered Geographic information systems (GIS) data, satellite remote sensing and GIS application.

This implies that in spite of the activities of insurgents, majority of the topics in the Geography curriculum was covered, while topics in GIS are the least covered by teachers, thus an indication of their inability to move about in search for real source materials for teaching and learning.

The Effects of insurgency on the Geography teachers' methods of delivering the Geography curriculum content

This research investigated the extent to which insurgency affected the methods of teaching used by Geography teachers in Borno State. The result is reported in table 2.

Table 2 summarizes the responses on effect of insurgency on methods Geography teachers used in delivering the content of the Geography curriculum in the study area. The mean response of the teachers on all the five items were higher than the standard mean of 2.5, meaning that they answer affirms to each of the items. These mean that the advent of insurgency in the region has prevented the use of practical teaching methods known to Geography teaching. All of the teachers admitted they do not expose students to field observation, demonstrations and deep discussions, but use chalk-talk method. The fear for the lives of teachers, students, inadequate provision of instructional materials and reduced class size due to insurgency has made teachers resort to the use of one of the most traditional and easiest methods of teaching Geography, a subject that has been described as a field of science and the field is its laboratory.

Effect of insurgency on students' achievement in Geography in four LGAs of Borno State.

The results of the investigation on the effect of insurgency on students' achievement in Geography in 4 selected local government Areas of Borno State are presented in Table 3:

Table 3, shows a summary of Geography students' achievement in the 2022 WASSCE for 12 secondary schools of 4 LGAs of Borno State amidst insurgency. The results indicated that a total of 64 representing 19% and 269 (81%) of the candidates who sat for Geography passed (grades A1-C6) and failed (grades D7-F9) respectively. Thus, majority of the candidates (269) which is 81%, that sat for the WASSCE examination, failed and thus not qualified for career choice in Geography and related fields, which will in the long-term have negative national consequences. The poor achievement of students in Geography is attributable to poor implementation of the Geography curriculum due to heightened activities of insurgents in Borno State in general.

Discussions

The researcher investigated implementation of the geography curriculum on the coverage of contents, methods of teaching, and overall effect on Geography students' academic achievement. The findings of the study revealed that in spite of continuous attacks by insurgents, Geography teachers were able to implement (cover) most of the topics in the senior secondary Geography curriculum with exception of GIS data, GIS application and satellite remote sensing. This finding is in corroboration with Dakur and Muwus (2021) and Gasi *et al.*, (2025) who reported that student's recorded low achievement in the new topics in the Geography curriculum, which includes GIS.

Findings of the study also showed that insurgency in the study area has made it extremely difficult for teachers of Geography to use the most suitable methods of teaching for the implementation of the curriculum. Hence teachers are compelled to use chalk-talk method in teaching which is least suited for teaching the contents of the Geography curriculum. This is attributable to increased security threats in the fields students were supposed to visit, and absence of teaching materials required facilitating graphic demonstration of Geography concepts. Emaikwu (2012) has reported that reduction in standard of students' performance at secondary school level is caused by pedagogical approaches adopted by their teachers.

Olatoye and Adekoya (2010) have similarly recommended that the use of conventional methods such as chalk-talk and lecture should be discouraged as these methods do not engender critical thinking, mastery and retention of essential concepts. Findings of the study also revealed that the students' Geography achievement in the study area was poor. This outcome was strongly related to teacher and school learning environment factors that affected teaching and learning in the study area. A study by Adio *et al.*, (2021) revealed that learning achievement had a strong relationship with elements of implementation of the learning curriculum. This highlighted that improving the quality of implementation of the curriculum will also improve the achievement of students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, insurgency had negatively affected the implementation of the senior secondary Geography curriculum in some parts of Borno State of Nigeria. This is due largely to incessant Insurgency activities that lead to use of inappropriate teaching methods, limited time for implementation and the overall poor students' achievements of in Geography.

The study however recommends that:

1. Government should urgency provide all the necessary security architecture required to safeguard lives and properties in schools, as this is essential for effective teaching and learning.
2. Parents, guardians and major stakeholders should always provide necessary consent to school authorities to enable their wards participate in local fieldwork within the safe areas to enhance teaching and learning.
3. More qualified and skilful teachers should be employed who can improvise and simulate practical teaching resources for increased success in the implementation of the curriculum.
4. Government should replace Teaching and learning materials destroyed during insurgency to foster teachers' teaching and students' learning effectiveness

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Tables**Table 1:** Summary of Teachers Responses on the Extent of Coverage of Senior Secondary School Geography Curriculum

No	Geogr. Curriculum Topics	Covered	Not covered	Total			
s/n	Curriculum Contents	Freq.	Perc. (%)	Resp.	Perc. (%)	Resp.	Percent (%)
1	Cover of Villages	138	86	22	14	160	100
2	Coverage of Towns	149	93	11	07	160	100
3	Local Govt. Area (LGA)	155	97	05	03	160	100
4	The earth and other planets	157	98	03	02	160	100
5	Earth rotation and Revolution	141	88	19	12	160	100
6	Latitudes and Longitudes	146	91	14	09	160	100
7	Earth structure and Rocks	144	90	16	10	160	100
8	Soils and Mountains	160	100	00	00	160	100
9	Lowlands and Environment	160	100	00	00	160	100
10	Weather and climate	159	99	01	01	160	100
11	Climatic classifications	156	98	04	02	160	100
12	Environmental resources	152	95	08	05	160	100
13	Renewable and non-renewable resources	130	81	30	19	160	100
14	Environmental problems and conservation	96	60	64	40	160	100
15	Basic concepts in map reading and Map Distances	143	89	17	11	160	100
16	Map reduction and enlargement	132	83	28	17	160	100
17	Interpretation of physical and cultural features	95	59	65	41	160	100
18	Direction and bearings	115	72	45	28	160	100
19	Relief forms representation	95	59	65	41	160	100
20	Transportation	128	80	32	20	160	100
21	Population and Settlement interactions	145	91	15	09	160	100
22	Geo-political issues.	151	94	09	06	160	100
23	Basic concepts and components of GIS	140	90	20	10	160	100
24	GIS data	73	46	87	54	160	100
25	Satellite remote sensing and GIS application	35	22	125	78	160	100
	Total	3,291	79.20%	705	17%	4,000	2,500

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 2: Summary of Responses of Teachers on Effect of Insurgency on Methods of Teaching Geography

Item	N	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Ans.
1. There is inadequate supply of teaching materials for graphic demonstration in teaching	160	105	55	0	0	6.40	Accept
2. Students are not exposed to field observation due to insurgency.	120	40	0	0	0	6.44	Accept
3. Chalk talk method is used in teaching rather than employing More practical method	121	39	0	0	0	6.46	Accept
4. Students are not taken out for field visits for fear of possible attack from insurgent group.	120	40	0	0	0	6.48	Accept
5. Students are not exposed to class discussion due to low attendance leading to reduced class size.	101	59	0	0	0	6.49	Accept

Sources: Field Data, 2025.

Table 3: Summary of Geography Students' Achievement in 2022 WASSCE in Sampled Schools of 4 LGAs

School	Pass		Fail		Total	
Askira/Uba	A1 - C6 Percentage		D7 - F9 Percentage		A1 – F9 Percentage	
1.	4	21%	15	79%	19	100%
2.	5	28%	13	72%	18	100%
3.	8	32%	17	68%	25	100%
4.	6	15%	35	85%	41	100%
Bama						
5.	5	26%	14	74%	19	100%
6.	6	35%	11	65%	17	100%
7.	6	33%	12	67%	18	100%
8.	10	46%	12	54%	22	100%
Dikwa						
9.	2	12%	15	88%	17	100%
10.	1	06%	17	94%	18	100%
11.	4	12%	30	88%	34	100%
12.	1	07%	13	93%	14	100%
Gwoza						
13.	2	09%	20	91%	22	100%
14.	1	06%	17	94%	18	100%
15.	1	07%	14	93%	15	100%
16.	2	13%	14	87%	16	100%
Total	64	19%	269	81%	333	1,600%

Sources: School Data, 2021.