THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF TERRORISM ON INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

Nalah Augustine Bala[1]
Azlinda Azman[2]
Paramjit Singh Jamir Singh[3]

ABSTRACT

The research study was designed to explore the psychological impact of the Boko Haram Insurgency on the Internally Displaced Persons in the Nasarawa State IDP camps. We adopted a cross-sectional study and selected 381 married and unmarried male and female IDPs aged 18 to 65 selected using a simple random sampling technique across IDP camps in Nasarawa State. A self-administered instrument (Terrorism Social Health Scale-TSHS) was designed with content and construct validity, and a Cronbach alpha reliability index of 0.91 was reached. Pearson (r) correlation analyse and test the hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05. The finding reveals a statistically significant relationship (r.Cal. = 1.86; r.Obs. = 4.54; df = 9; $P < 0.05$) between the Boko Haram insurgency and male and female IDPs in Nasarawa State. Similarly, findings indicated no statistically significant relationship (r.Cal. = 7.59; r.Obs. = 4.52; df = 97; $P>0.05$) between forced displacement and the marital status of IDPs.

Keywords: Boko Haram, psychological impact, internally displaced persons, terrorism.

[1] Nalah Augustine Bala is with the Department of Psychology, Nasarawa State University Keffi, P.M.B 1022 Keffi, Nigeria nalahaugustineb@gmail.com/nalah@usm.my, **Orcid ID:** https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8254-8413.

[2] Azlinda Azman is with the Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Pulau Penang, Malaysia

[3] Paramjit Singh Jamir Singh is with the Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Pulau Penang, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

The peace enjoyed around the world is currently being threatened by the activities of insurgent groups that are making people live in fear and misery. Terrorism and insurgency have gone global as few nations have experienced socio-political instability and economic underdevelopment due to insecurity affecting the nation's sustainability (Elnahass et al., 2022). The manifestation of terrorism and insurgency in Africa, especially in Nigeria, is evident in the emergence of the Boko Haram terrorist group in Nigeria. The emergence of the sectarian insurgency group has wreaked havoc across the country through the use of explosives and firearms with horrific and deadly results (Ike et al., 2022). It is observed that war, terrorism and other forms of cross-border political violence due to ethnic and religious backgrounds are more threatening today than ever (Armaly et al., 2022; Demarest et al., 2020). The crime phenomenon has negatively affected the nation's economic, social and political life and increased the number of civilian casualties (Tajudeen & Adebayo, 2013).

Furthermore, terrorism, whether national or transnational, undermines trust between communities and destroys the reservoir of social capital critical for building harmonious societies and channelling community energies for national development (Arif & Suleman, 2017). It is a fact of history that development thrives in a peaceful environment. However, increased insurgency activity in Nigeria has created a humanitarian crisis that has resulted in human casualties, human rights abuses, forced displacement and a refugee debacle (Okoli & Iortyer, 2014). Most of the victims of the insurgency fall within the productive age. It is a humanitarian, economic, social, and psychological challenge. The horrific killings of people in the crisis areas forced them to leave their homes and resort to camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) (Comolli, 2015). They struggle to survive in their newly discovered camps as the terrorists destroy their homes and source of livelihood.

The associated consequences of internal displacement are not peculiar to only Nigeria. Historically, records show that around 100 million people were displaced during the World War (1939-1945), five

million in the protracted Israeli-Palestinian war that began in 1948, and between one and five million during the Korean War (1950-1953) (United Nations, 2022). In the same light, three million people were displaced during the Vietnam War (which ended in 1975), three million during the former Yugoslav conflict (1991-1995), and about a million and a half during the Rwanda War (1994). In 2020, the Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) estimated approximately 33.3 million displaced people worldwide (excluding development-related displacements), half of whom are in Africa. The countries with the most IDPs were Syria (6.5 million), Colombia (5.7 million), Nigeria (3.3 million), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2.9 million), Sudan (2.4 million) and Somalia (1.1 million) (IDMC, 2020).

In Nigeria, 12.6 per cent were displaced due to communal disputes, 2.4 per cent due to natural disasters, and 85 per cent due to Boko Haram Islamist attacks (Osasona, 2022). The assessment of the International Organizations for Migration, in its study of thirteen states in northern Nigeria, found the following numbers in camps for IDPs as a result of riots and other criminal activities such as attacks by Fulani herders and clashes between communities: Abuja (13,481 IDPs), Adamawa (136,010 IDPs), Bauchi (70,078), Benue (85,393), Borno (1,434,149 IDPs), Gombe (25,332 IDPs), Kaduna (36,976 IDPs), Kano (9,331 IDPs), Nasarawa (37,553 IDPs), Plateau (77,317 IDPs), Taraba (50,227 IDPs), Yobe (131,203 IDPs) and Zamfara (44,929 IDPs) (IDMC, 2015). The proliferation of IDP camps in Nigeria has been evident since 2009, when Boko Haram gained recognition from international media and Western society, particularly after the tragic event that led to the kidnapping of over 200 Chibok schoolgirls in 2014 (Zenn, 2014). Most research reports confirm that Boko Haram has displaced more than 3 million people across Nigeria, leading to social inequality, poverty, food insecurity, poor governance, forced displacement and risky behaviours that lead to high rates of diseases such as HIV infection (Nsemba & Henry, 2016; Raji et al., 2021). The activities of Boko Haram's brutal attacks proved to be the most critical factor contributing to the spread of IDPs in the country.

Furthermore, in Nigeria, the Boko Haram insurgency has introduced a terrorist dimension to the criminal space that was previously unknown. In the past few years, Boko Haram has created widespread insecurity and displaced people across northern Nigeria, increasing tensions between diverse communities, disrupting development activities, frightening investors and raising concern among north-east, north-central Nigeria, and Nigerians from other parts of the country and those living abroad (Aliyu & Abubakar, 2022). The politicization of religion and ethnicity led to the emergence of a terrorist group, Boko Haram group, better known by its name JamaatulAhlilSunna LiddaawatiWal-Jihadis, is a terrorist organization based in northeastern Nigeria, founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 (Ike, 2022; Ike et al., 2022: Onapajo & Usman, 2015). It is an Islamist movement that firmly rejects constituted laws. The sect is trying to abolish the secular system of government and introduce Sharia law in the country. The movement named *Boko Haram* was translated in Hausa meaning "*western education is sacrilege or sin*," and was responsible for the destruction and damage to infrastructure, more than 50,000 killings, and billions of naira being lost in Nigeria (Oriakhi & Osemwengie, 2012).

Displaced people in Nigeria and other parts of the world have different needs in the short, medium and long term. These primarily include food, water, shelter, health care, safety, education, physical and psychological well-being, support to restore family ties, and economic and social rehabilitation (Cantor et al., 2021; Ngoshe et al., 2022). The psychosocial effects of traumatic events such as displacement often have serious consequences (Bürgin et al., 2022; Kadir et al., 2019). Most internally displaced people in Nigeria have been deprived of their homes, their land, and access to necessities such as food, water and affordable housing. They flee to safe neighbouring communities and take refuge in makeshift shelters such as places of worship, schools, military barracks, police stations and public buildings (Ekoh et al., 2022). The complexity of internal displacement in Nigeria has left internally displaced people among the most vulnerable people in the world, with barriers to accessing health services, education,

employment, economic activities and information to participate in decisions affecting their lives (Schimmel, 2022). They are at high risk of malnutrition, sexual violence, exploitation and disease, including HIV/AIDS (Daw et al., 2022; Spiegel, 2004).

The IDPs who are victims of terrorism and Boko Haram attacks suffer from psychological factors leading to anxiety, stress, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, psychophysiological disorders, and general health challenges that affect their daily activities while seeking refuge in different IDP camps (Mellor et al., 2021; Ugbe et al., 2022). The experiences of IDPs include physical abuse, torture, the disappearance of family members, harassment and forced eviction, describing the phenomenon of internal displacement with challenging mental health and psychological problems (Tay, 2022).

Internal displacement has also become an issue of increasing international concern as the mass population displacement is leading to severe psychological security challenges and instability in the entire region. This invariably affects the capacity of the individual to logically perform mental analysis and a psychological evaluation of health-related high-risk behaviours that could lead to increased vulnerability to HIV infection, health and psychological well–being of the individual and members of the communities (Cantor et al., 2022). Similarly, there is a consensus that the massive destruction of infrastructure and other social and economic facilities by the terrorist group Boko Haram insurgency has left victims physically and mentally traumatized (Mesa-Vieira et al., 2022; Steel et al., 2009). There is no doubt that when victims remember such terrible experiences of physical abuse, torture, the disappearance of family members, harassment and displacement from the IDP camps can lead to severe psychological problems with long-term consequences.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Social Exclusion Theory

Social exclusion theory is multidimensional, with several necessary conditions always being defined by a multiplicative effect of a set of variables causing social exclusion. Social exclusion theory

focuses on individuals or groups who are socially excluded because they are distinct subgroups of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in which social isolation occurs for reasons beyond the control of those affected (Beißert et al., 2022). In the light of this study, the combination of factors that cause social exclusion is the characteristics of displaced and vulnerable people, forming a single demographic group of internally displaced people who face a combination of interrelated problems such as social isolation and terrorist attacks. Others include Boko Haram attacks, banditry, lost property and loved ones, unemployment, low incomes, discrimination, no shelter and forced displacement. Social exclusion theory categorizes young people and women as the most vulnerable group, more likely to be socially excluded.

In most cases, the researchers in this study can combine social exclusion theory with the understanding that young people and women comprise most of the population in refugee camps. It is evident because most of the men who stayed behind to defend and protect their homes and families were killed by the terrorists living behind the children and women (Amitay & Sidi, 2022). The theoretical application of social exclusion theory to this study is concerned with advocating the establishment and implementation of social exclusion policies to promote individuals' well-being by promoting social equality, economic empowerment, religious freedom and political participation. Policies should promote the social inclusion of disadvantaged individuals such as IDPs by establishing social recreation centres to train IDPs in various professional skills, social and religious places of worship, health facilities, formal or informal education, and laws to protect the IDPs' health and psychological well-being.

The research objective of the study is to examine the impact of terrorism on the health and psychological well-being of internally displaced persons and HIV prevalence in North Central Nigeria. The following hypotheses guided the study:

i. There would be a significant relationship between Boko Haram insurgency and male and female IDPs in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

ii. Forced displacement would significantly relate to married and unmarried IDPs in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Design

Researchers conducted a cross-sectional study to sample groups of displaced people from the selected IDP camps to describe their sociodemographic characteristics, including age, gender, marital status and reasons for displacement. Also, survey data were analyzed using the Social Science Statistics Package (SPSS) to measure relationships between variables (Rahman & Muktadir, 2021). A cross-sectional study was chosen for this study because it can be used to collect data on various attributes, including age, gender, and access to services, and suggest a correlation or relationship. However, the researcher does not manipulate variables by assigning subjects to groups.

POPULATION

The population comprised 40,000 IDPs, as projected by the Nasarawa State Emergency Management Agency (NASEMA) in North Central Nigeria (NASEMA, 2022).

SAMPLE AND SAMPLE SIZE

The participants were a sample of 381 randomly selected 121 (31.8%) married, 244 (64) unmarried, and 16 (4.2) divorced males (122, 32%) and 259 (68%) females from selected IDP camps across the Nasarawa State, including Mararaban Akunza Daddere Market IDP camp and Agwatashi Primary School IDP camp. Participants selected by a simple random sampling indicated their willingness to participate voluntarily in the study by signing an informed consent form. A total sample size of 381 was calculated using a standard population formula with a population of 40,000, assuming an absolute precision of 5%, a marginal error of 0.05 (5%), a 95% confidence level, and a standard deviation value of 0, 5 (50%) (ONeill, 2022).

INSTRUMENTATION AND VALIDITY

We developed a structured, self-administered questionnaire to measure the impact of terrorism on IDPs in North Central Nigeria. Researchers recruited and trained research assistants to collect data by distributing the self-administer questionnaire for the pre-testing and pilot testing using a different sample of the target group of IDPs from Nasarawa State. Twenty (20) participants were used for the pre-testing and 30 for the pilot testing. The pre-testing exercise helped to improve the structure, questions and major problems observed in the participants' responses. The same steps were followed for pilot testing, and a completed questionnaire was entered into the database to test the analysis (Barthold et al., 2022). Part 'A' of the instruments elicited a response on demographic variables (e.g. age, gender, marital status, and displacement reasons).

Parts B focused on terrorism, Boko Haram, and IDPs in Nasarawa State. The study adopted content validity, and experts provided face and content validity of a 30-item 5-point "Terrorism Social Health Scale-TSHS" Likert scale instrument. They examined all questions, structure and language of the questionnaire and modified some to minimize inconsistencies and ambiguities. A Cronbach alpha reliability index of 0.91 and factor analysis ranging from 5.83 to 9.35 was obtained. The first and second index analysis validation scale gives a validity index of 0.75 and 0.87, respectively.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Nasarawa State Emergency Management Agency, in collaboration with the IDP Coordinator at the Nasarawa State Ministry of Health Lafia, granted approval and permission for the research REG. No: NHREC/IDP/2020/18-06-2020. Researchers and some recruited and trained IDP data collection staff interacted with participants from selected IDP camps. The volunteer participants were informed in detail about the purpose and aim of the study. They gave consent to participate in the study by completing the consent form. Participants who participated voluntarily were instructed not to give their names. The researcher adheres to the legal and ethical obligation to assure

participants of absolute confidentiality and the right to withdraw from the research and have their information destroyed at any time (Yip et al., 2016).

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1 shows the descriptive results of the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents from IDP camps in Nasarawa State, North Central Nigeria. Tables 2 and 3, analyzes the result presented the n, Ẍ, SD, df, r-Cal., r-Obs., and P-value of terrorism on gender and forced displacement. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson-r correlation and the data were analyzed at a significance level of 0.05.

RESULTS

We adopted descriptive statistics to present the sociodemographic characteristics through frequencies, percentages, and means. In contrast, the inferential statistics used for testing the null hypotheses were the Pearson-r product-moment correlation coefficient to measure the relationship between variables in the study.

DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS OF SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Descriptive findings show that most respondents were young female IDPs (68%) aged 18 to 35 (73.2%), and the majority were not married (68.2%), with 64% singles and divorced 4.2%. As shown in Table 1, most of the respondents (91.6%) depend on the IDP camps for everything with zero or no monthly income, and few earn less than ₦10,000 (6%). A significant concern is that the majority of the respondents (80.1%) resort to IDP camps because they are displaced of valuables and loved ones due to the Fulani attack, and 11.3% are due to the attack by unknown gunmen suspected to be a terrorist sect of Boko Haram.

Table 1 shows the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents, IDPs in Nasarawa State

S/N	Variables	Nomenclature	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	122	32
		Female	259	68
2	Age	18-35	279	73.2
		36-45	68	17.9
		≥ 46	34	8.9
3	Marital status	Married	121	31.8
		Single	244	64
		Divorced	16	4.2
4	Forced displacement reasons	Communal crisis	27	7
		Fulani attack	305	80.1
		Unknown gunmen	43	11.3
		Religious conflict	6	1.6
5	Monthly income	None	349	91.6
		>N10,000	23	6
		≥ 46	9	2.4

Source: Nasarawa State Terrorism, IDPs & HIV Research, 2022

HYPOTHESES TESTING

Hypothesis one: There would be a significant relationship between Boko Haram insurgency and male and female IDPs in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Table 2 shows the summary of the Pearson-r product-moment correlation coefficient to assess the relationship between Boko Haram insurgency and males and females IDPs in Nasarawa State.

Variables	Internally Displaced Persons								
	Gender	**N**	**X**	**SD**	**df**	**r.Cal**	**r.Obs**	**P**	**Remark**
Boko Haram	Male	122	32	52.31	9	1.86	4.54	<0.05	Significant
	Female	259	68	89.3					

As shown in Table 2, female IDPs show a high mean value and standard deviation (X = 68, SD = 89.3) from the first analysis on the relationship between terrorism (Boko Haram insurgency) and gender across IDP camps in Nasarawa State. In contrast, the male counterpart recorded a low mean value and standard deviation (X = 32, SD = 52.31), and the Pearson-r analysis showed a statistically significant relationship between Boko Haram insurgency and increased IDPs across gender having r.Cal = 1.86; r.Obs = 4.54; df = 9; P < 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis Two: Forced displacement would significantly relate to married and unmarried IDPs in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

Table 3 shows the summary of the Pearson-r Product Moment Correlation coefficient to assess the relationship between Force Displacement and the marital status of IDPs in Nasarawa State.

Variables	Internally Displaced Persons								
	Marital Status	**N**	**X**	**SD**	**df**	**r.Cal**	**r.Obs**	**P**	**Remark**
Force Displacement	Married	121	31.8	52.31	9	7.59	4.52	>0.05	Not Significant
	Single	244	64	89.3	7				
	Divorced	416	4.2	11.3					

As shown in Table 3, the analysis of the mean scores and standard deviation on the relationship between forced displacement and marital status of the IDPs indicates the following marital statuses: married (X = 31.8, SD = 52.31), single (X = 64, SD = 89.3), and Divorced (X = 4.2, SD = 11.3). M=65.5, SD=6.86). It shows no statistically significant having r.Cal. = 7.59; r.Obs. = 4.52; df = 97; P>0.05. Therefore, we reject the hypothesis. Hence, forced displacement has no statistical relationship with the marital status of the IDPs in Nasarawa State.

DISCUSSION

The study's outcome revealed an intriguing pattern of psychological and social consequences for victims of evictions in the Nasarawa IDP camps. The result is that the uncertainty of life is the ultimate destiny of living on the run, throwing families off balance and disrupting coexistence. This manifests itself in victims feeling agitated, restless, aggressive, hopeless, and helpless, with unusual reactions of anger and hostility towards the people they believe are responsible for their distress. In addition, the study confirmed that victims of displacement, particularly young female IDPs, suffered from depression, anger and emotional instability.

The study by Olufadewa and colleagues supported the claim that young displaced women suffer from the mental and psychological problems identified in this study (Olufadewa et al., 2022). They confirmed that the young female IPDs presented negative experiences and symptoms related to mental health disorders and mental imbalance, including PTSD, stress, anxiety, depression and anger, during and after displacement in IDP camps. This also confirmed that the aftermath of forced displacement and the resulting mental health problems had become barriers to living healthy and productive lives with little or no access to quality mental health care and social support. Other research has shown similar results (Addington et al., 2018; Mesa-Vieira et al., 2022; Slewa-Younan et al., 2014; Steel et al., 2009; Ugbe et al., 2022).

Because the general results of Morina et al. (2018) found that the protracted armed conflicts have a lasting impact on the lives of the

forcibly displaced population, exacerbating the symptoms of psychiatric disorders such as mood and anxiety disorders, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, which are both distressing and harmful to mental health. The theoretical analogy using social exclusion theory contrasted the adverse effects of forced displacement on the social isolation of IDPs, increasing mental health problems and mental disorders. Other research shows a strong association between perceived exposure to conflict/violence and displacement (Brgin et al., 2022; Wirtz et al., 2014).

Similarly, Table 3 shows that forced displacement has no statistically significant association with IDP marital status. On average, the current results showed negatively low means and standard deviations for married IDPs compared to their unmarried (single) counterparts. In contrast, a study by Hamid and Musa (2010) showed that married participants showed high levels of dissatisfaction with living conditions and were more socially disturbed, anxious, and distressed than the single unmarried IDPs, who reported more avoidance symptoms.

In the Nasarawa state IDP camps, it has become clear that little attention is paid to psychological and mental health care for victims of violence, conflict and displacement. Conversely, considerable effort is directed towards meeting their physical and basic needs such as food, clothing, water and sanitation. This attitude of only meeting the physical needs of the IDPs, particularly during the emergency phase of displacement, without adequately addressing their psychological and mental health needs, had adverse effects during the IDP camp and post-displacement life. Against this background, recent findings lend credence to research by Jolof, which suggested that exposure of internally displaced persons to armed conflict carries significant risks for psychiatric disorders, including major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, mood disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Jolof et al., 2022).

In addition, Tay (2022) opined that establishing a community support network through the provision of basic mental health needs such as work rights, health care, employment opportunities and social

services to IDPs can meet the psychological and mental health needs of IDPs, particularly in low-income countries such as Nigeria. Mental health care for internally displaced persons needs to be culturally appropriate and tailored to their life experiences. Trilesnik et al. (2019) added that organizing state intercultural mental health, psychiatric-psychotherapeutic care, and routine psychiatric care for the needs of IDPs can be effective mental health care. Other studies (Hoppen et al., 2021; Porter & Haslam, 2005; Slone & Mann, 2016) have linked health and IDPs.

Furthermore, internally displaced persons, particularly those affected by traumatic conflicts such as the Boko Haram conflict, are at risk of mental health problems (Mudasiru et al., 2022). The commonly reported psychological responses are post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in response to violence and depression in response to loss. Victims are also vulnerable to other mental health problems, such as panic attacks and anxiety disorders (Olufadewa et al., 2022). The psychological stress in the post-war environment also contributes to unhealthy behaviours, such as risky drinking, increased smoking and the desire to take revenge through aggressive and violent behaviour, affecting their psychosocial adjustment processes since the living conditions in the camp differ significantly from those before the war. There is a need to provide structured psychosocial intervention among the IDPs to improve living conditions and deal with the consequences of their existence in camps (Sarkinfada & Multafu, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The Boko Haram insurgency poses a significant challenge that overwhelms the country's policymakers in the early stages. Nigeria is waging an asymmetric war that could take years to resolve. Unfortunately, this means more families and communities are being forced into camps for internally displaced persons. Victims' experiences affected them, leading to feelings of powerlessness and mental limitations that led to depression, chronic anxiety, and psychological trauma. A better understanding of these issues is needed to provide the necessary interventions for social support and psychotherapeutic care

to the displaced population. Victims can often reconnect with their psychological resources and survival skills with appropriate psychosocial support and develop collective and individual psychosocial resilience. The primary goal of psychosocial intervention for IDPs is to establish, restore and maintain the social functioning of the affected population and the affective and emotional balance of the individual at the level of their social environment.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

It follows that the issue of displaced victims of conflict deserves the most significant attention. Governments and self-help groups must provide a platform where peace/conflict resolution strategies can be effectively promulgated and implemented. It is essential to include psychological, social and mental health services in the minimum packages available to IDPs at all stages of displacement needs.

The guiding principles for dealing with IDPs should be holistic and, in particular, seriously consider the psychosocial aspects by introducing rehabilitation and post-conflict care for IDPs. This becomes relevant as the study revealed some psychological distress from

displacement that warrants the same rigorous psychotherapeutic interventions in an organized setting and has therefore highlighted the need to integrate and incorporate psychotherapeutic psychiatric services into the overall treatment protocol/management of IDPs. A framework needs to be created within which policymakers can formulate strategies that improve the holistic care of victims of conflict, violence/displacement.

Over the years, the authorities' efforts toward IDPs have been described as relatively negligible, and their attitude is indifferent, leaving IDPs with very few options for the future. The Guiding Principle in the Nigerian Government's Internal Displacement Document is a critical principle that fully respects international and national approaches to internal displacement.

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