



## Combating Insurgency: Adult Mass Literacy as Catalysts in Northern Nigeria

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### Abstract

Illiteracy is one of the greatest challenges to individual's critical thinking for making a rational decision. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised of Boko-Haram insurgents. The sample size of the study was Ninety five (95) respondents selected, through a snowball sampling technique. Two research questions were raised. Data were obtained, through a self-developed research instruments, entitled "Questionnaire on combating Insurgency Adult Mass Literacy as catalyst in Northern Nigeria" (CIMALCNN), fashioned on four liker rating scale, strongly Agreed (SA) Agreed (A) Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed. It was rated on 4, 3, 2 and 1 points respectively. The researcher instruments were validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation. Its reliability was determined, using test-retest method at two weeks interval and 70,1 coefficient reliability was established. Data were analyzed, using Descriptive Statistics (Simple percentages, frequency counts and Mean). Based on the findings conclusions were made that, through Mass Adult Literacy (MAL) people could acquire skills, thus enhance their employability chances in the labour market. Besides, MAL could also reduce recruitment of people to join Boko Haram insurgency in Northern, Nigeria Based on the conclusions recommendations were made that, government should create more of centers of Adult Mass Literacy programme for easy accessibility to the programme. In additions government should provide adequate resources for sustainability of the programme, and so on.

**Keywords:** Combating, Insurgency, Adult, Mass literacy, Insecurity challenges

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### Introduction

#### Background of the Study

Security challenges in Nigeria are not recent trends and heinous activities threatening the cooperate existence and retarding socio-economic development of the country. However, its dimension in recent times is worrisome and tarnishing a long preserved good image of the country at global level. Its forms range from banditry kidnapping, insurgency, Fulani herdsmen clashes with farmers, Islamic states West Africa province sect and many other Deadly and criminal groups.

Professional certifications from higher education institutions demonstrate the holder's competency and readiness to engage in professional practice. They play an important role in signalling to employers that graduates have both theoretical knowledge and the practical skills required for effective performance in their respective fields (Mahalingam, 2024) <sup>[19]</sup>. As such, these standards are integral to the value proposition of higher education. They provide a tangible measure of the quality of education and training provided.

The insurgency in Nigeria, specifically is a complex and a long term security crisis primarily, orchestrated by Boko-Haram and its allied groups, ISWAP. Their activities predominantly centered in the Northern part of the country, majorly the North-East region. Insurgency had claimed over 38,000 lives and 2.5 million displacement. Insurgency is a humanitarian crisis worsened and heightened by banditry, Kidnapping, and farmer-herder conflicts (Akinbi,2015.)<sup>[3]</sup>.According to Agbelusi (2022)<sup>[2]</sup>, ‘‘The issues of insecurity in Neria Becomes something of a grave concernTo all well –meaning citizens, most of whom continue to wonder how the Country arrived to such a dastardly Situation, where no one is safe and worst still rather than abate, the problems is escalating’’

Boko-Haram has become a major concern to Nigeria government and international community in general. Akinbi (2015)<sup>[3]</sup>, states that the activities of insurgents sect specifically, since 2009 has constituted a major security threat to the nation, and make Northern Nigeria, particularly North-East, where their activities are thriving the most dangerous region to live in the country. Further, Akinbi (2015)<sup>[3]</sup>, maintains that the dynamics and sophistication of insurgents operations, and apparent invincibility of the set raised fundamental questions not only about national security but also on governance issues as well as on Nigeria’s corporate existence

Insurgency in Nigeria has been an obstacle to economic progress, development, development, prosperity and sustainable socio-peace stability due to its destructive consequential effects. The entire landscape of Nigeria is firmly gripped. There is fear tension, feeling of unsafe, uproar, killing genocide, specifically in the Northern, Nigeria.Odumu and Abdullahi (2022)<sup>[1]</sup>, report that between November 2019 and May, 2020 insurgency claimed about1,058 lives, rustling of over, 10,000 cattle destruction of 2,688 hectares of farmland and 10,000 houses, respectively, loss of 147,800 vehicles and motorcycles, as well as displacement of hundred thousands of persons.

The complex situation of insurgency, banditry, kidnapers have been obstacles to many institutions in Nigeria. On a daily basis mosques and churches are being attacked. Police stations are not in exception. Schools are as well-being attacked incessantly. Igwa(2021) notes that schools attendance is fast dwindling and there is a high spate and rate of attrition. Insurgency have forced closure of an estimated 600schools. According to Kosi(2021), many schools had been attacked students and staff and other school staff were taken with captivity. Some died in the process, some were fortunate to either escaped or granted freedom after payment of heavy ransoms demanded by the insurgents. Many staff have deserted their job and flew for safety (Efe,2022)<sup>[5]</sup>

According to Dantata (2014),’’ one of the greatest challenges facing educational sector in Nigeria is security challenge. A security challenge has negative impact on teachers’ productivity. Effective job performance and productivity could only be possible in safe environment (Nkechi Abraham and Nwoju, 2018)<sup>[9]</sup>. Ayodele (2000) and conneyras (2003), state that schools may not record any success without maximal security in an atmosphere of peace, unity of purpose and action thrive well, workers morale is boosted and positively induce in an environment devoid of threatening. Ogunade and Fatima (2021), note that criminal activities in the Northern Nigeria constitute a menace for effective schools administration and management

Today, the exact number of school children kidnapped cannot be accurately ascertained. The most famous school attack which attracts the attention of international community was the attack on Government Secondary school on the night of 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2014 in which 276 girls were abducted from their dormitories in the town of Chibok in Borno state. Some states, like Zamfara, Kaduna, Niger and so on experienced the unsavory incidence and trends of kidnapping schools students and personnel from elementary to tertiary institution By and large, insecurity challenges are cogs in the wheel of the nations, development in a holistic context. Several factors had been identified as causes of insurgency, kidnapping, banditry, and so on in the country. Erinsakin (2014)<sup>[7]</sup>, traces isurgency to high level of poverty and unemployment, corruption, terrorism, unfair and injustice in distribution of national wealth, weak judiciary system, narcotics, bad governance, proliferation of light or small arms, and so on The realization of negative impact of insurgency and other criminal sects have informed several government pro-active policies and strategies to nid the trend in a bud, such as procurement of technical and electronic gadgets for effective monitoring and surveillance, declaration of state of emergency, strengthening military capacity by recruiting more personnel’s giving incentives to security personnel’s to boost their morale, proposing state police, and so on. However, rather than reducing insurgency is still at high rate, pages of national newspapers on a daily basis are flooded by the news of insurgency in Nigeria.

Various studies had been conducted on insurgency and their activities, specifically in the Northern, Nigeria. Atgula (2015) carried out a study on impact of Boko-Haram insurgency on principals, teachers and students in senior secondary schools in Borno State Nigeria. Abdullahi (2022)<sup>[1]</sup> also carried out research on managing basic education for safety and security in Nigeria, and many more researches. The reasons behind these studies were mainly to proffer enduring and lasting panaceas, and also to know or identify factors causing insurgency in the counter, specifically in the Northern part of the country.

However, the researcher observed that study or attention has not been focused on mass adult literacy as catalyst to combat insurgency in Northern, Nigeria.Sarumi (2001)<sup>[12]</sup>, mass adult literacy as intentionally and consciously planned educational programme to enable adult to acquire reading, writing and numeracy skills to solve daily challenges Egunjomi (2015), asserts that Nigeria is a strong member of E-a nations, based on the fact that the majority of citizens are illiterates other countries are,Mexico, Egypt, Pakistan, China, India, Brazil, Canada, Bangladesh and Indonesia.

Unfortunately, literacy rate in Northern Nigeria are significantly lower than the national average with substantial regional disparities some Northern states have higher figures, estimates for the North West and North East are as low as, 38% and 42% for young women, respectively. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), (201j5), Nigeria’s literacy rate is approximately 60%. The median literacy rate in the south is about 89%, while in the North (including Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, and the nation’s capital) it is around 34%. Comparatively, there is a wide gap between literacy rate in the Northern and Southern part of the country.

Boko-Haram insurgency is built on a radical notion that Western Education is a sin and deceit. Boko-Haram insurgents believe that Western education aims to

Christianize Muslims and introduce immorality. Further, they contending and argueing that formal schools promote immoral behaviors like; mixed sex interaction, and that the curriculum is planned and designed to destroy Islamic values In a nutshell, Boko-Haram's Philosophy is an ideological war against secularization of Nigerian society, through the eradication of Western education, replacing it with an absolute violent, thus, and fueling series of security challenges in Northern, Nigeria, specifically, today.

The researcher of this study therefore, identifies Boko-Haram Philosophy'' Western Education'' is evil and deceit which is the major off-shoot of insurgency in the country thus serves as motivational factor for carrying out this study to ascertain whether, adult mass literacy could be a catalyst to combat insurgency in Northern, Nigeria.

### Statement of the problem

The menace of Boko-Haram insurgency is biting hard on Nigerians and Nigeria, most especially in the Northern, Nigeria. Insecurity challenges have causes a great set-back to the nation's Development in a holistic context. Boko-Haram philosophy is built on the fact that Western education is evil, deceit and could destroy the Islamic value, thus, serves as rationale for unleashing fear, attacking establishments, institutions, killing people, kidnapping, and destroying property in the country.

The researcher therefore carried out this research to establish whether adult mass literacy could serve as a catalyst to combat insurgency in Northern, Nigeria

### Objectives of the Society

The specific objective of the study was on combating insurgency mass adult literacy as catalyst in Northern, Nigeria.

1. Investigate Adult Mass Literacy program impact on provision of employability skills: and
2. Determine influence of Adult Mass Literacy program on insurgents' recruitment drive reduction.

### Research Questions

Two research questions were raised for the study.

1. Can Adult Mass Literacy program impact on provision of employability skills in Northern, Nigeria?
2. Will Adult Mass Literacy program influence insurgent recruitment drive reduction in Northern, Nigeria?

### Methodology

Descriptive survey research Design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised repentant Boko-Haram insurgents. The sample size of the study was Ninety five (95) selected through a snowballing sample technique. Two research questions were raised. A self-developed research instruments entitled, 'Questionnaire on combating insurgency: Mass Adult Literacy as catalyst in Northern Nigeria 'QCIMALCNN''. It was fashioned on four points rating scale; Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (SD), rated on 4, 3, 2, and 1 points, respectively.

The research instruments were validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation. Its reliability was determined, through test- retest method at two weeks, interval.0.7 coefficient reliability was established.

Data obtained were analyzed, using descriptive statistics (simple percentages, frequency counts and mean (X).

### Presentation of Findings and Discussion of Results

#### Presentation of Findings

**Research Question One:** Can adult mass literacy impact on provision of employability skills in Northern, Nigeria?

**Table 1:** Showing simple percentages, frequency counts and mean (X) on can adult mass Literacy impact on provision of employability skills in Northern, Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	MEAN X	DECISION
1.	I joined the group because, I had no literacy ability to be relevant in the job market	81 85.26	9 9.47	2 2.10	3 3.15	95	3.76	Accepted
2.	Being literate does not enhance my relevance in the labor market	2 2.10	1 1.05	15 15.78	77 81.05	95	1.24	Rejected
3.	Ability to read will enable me to know the demand of the labor market	77 81.05	12 12.63	5 5.26	1 1.05	95	3.75	Accepted
4.	I am relevant in the labour in the labour market, despite my illiteracy level	5 5.26	8 8.42	13 13.68	69 72.63	95	1.46	Rejected
5.	Mass adult literacy programme will enhance my competition in the labour market	71 74.73	11 15.57	9 9.47	4 4.21	95	3.56	Accepted
6.	My competition is retarded, due to my literacy level	2 2.10	8 8.42	19 20	66 69.47	95	1.43	Rejected
7.	Due, I am literate I have no surrnus with the Boko-Haram sect	73 76.84	9 9.47	9 9.47	4 4.21	95	3.58	Accepted
8.	Despite being literate, I wile stile have link Boko-Haram sect	3 3.15	2 2.10	7 7.36	83 87.36	95	1.21	Rejected
	Average Weight	314 41.31	60 7.89	79 10.39	307 40.39		2.50	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Keys:

N= Total number of Respondents C= cut-off-point.

SA= Strongly Agreed A= Agreed D= Disagreed

SD = Strongly Disagreed X= Mean

Table 1 above, presents the findings on research question one. On item (1), the following responses were got, 81(85.26), 9(9.47), 2(2.10) and 3(3.15) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. On item, responses obtained indicate, 2(2.10), 1(1.05), 15(15.78)

and 77(81.05) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item (3), 77(81.05), 12(12.63), 5(5.26) and 1(1.05) were got for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, and strongly disagreed. On item (4), responses got show 5(5.26), 8(8.42), 13(13.68) and 69(72.63) for strongly

agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively.

On item (5), the following responses were got, 71(74.73), 11(15.57), 9(9.47) and 4(4.21) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item (6), responses obtained were, 2(2.10), 8(8.42), 19(20) and 66(69.47) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. On item (7), responses got also, reveals the following; 73(76.84), 9(9.47), 9(9.47), and 4(4.21) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. Finally, on item (8), responses obtained indicate, 3(8.15),

2(2.10), 7(7.36) and 83(87.36) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Generally, the average weight of the findings reveals that the average rating scale of four ( $X = 2.5$ ) is not lesser nor greater than the mean of average rating scale of four (2.50). This portends that mass adult literacy programme could positively and significantly provides employability skills in Northern, Nigeria.

**Research Question Two:** Research Will adult mass literacy influence insurgents' recruitment drive reduction in Northern, Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Showing simple percentages, frequency counts and mean (X) on will mass adult literacy influence insurgents recruitment drive reduction in Northern, Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	MEAN X	DECISION
9.	I joined Boko-Haram group because my inability to read to understand the philosophy of the criminal sect	69 72.63	13 13.68	4 4.21	9 9.47	95	3.49	Accepted
10.	If I am able to read the philosophy of Boko-Haram self, I would have join the criminal sect.	6 6.31	9 9.47	8 8.42	72 75.78	95	1.46	Rejected
11.	I was lured to become a member of the sect because of my literacy status.	76 80	9 9.47	4 4.21	6 6.31	95	3.65	Accepted
12.	If I am literate I would not have been easily lured to be a member of Boko-Haram	6 6.31	14 14.76	17 17.89	58 61.05	95	1.66	Rejected
13.	Majority of Boko-Haram insurgency are illiterates	81 85.26	10 10.52	3 3.15	1 1.05	95	3.8	Accepted
14.	The majority of Boko-Haram sect are illiterates	10 10.52	8 8.42	13 13.68	64 67.36	95	1.62	Rejected
15.	My illiteracy level does not make me to be rationale on Boko-Haram insurgents' philosophy	84 88.42	7 7.36	3 3.15	1 1.05	95	3.83	Accepted
16.	Adult mass literacy program has no influence on my rationality of being a member of Boko-Haram sect.	6 6.31	3 3.15	14 14.73	72 75.78	95	1.4	Rejected
	Average Weight	338 44.47	73 9.60	66 8.68	283 37.23		2.61	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Keys:

N= Total Number of Respondents C= cut-off-points

SA= Strongly Agreed A= Agreed, D= Disagreed

SD= Strongly Disagreed, X = Mean

Table 2 above, presents the findings on research question two as follows: on item (9), the following responses were got; 69(72.63), 13(13.68), 4(4.21) and 9(9.47) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. On item (10), responses got showed, 6(6.31), 9(9.47), 8(8.42) and 72(75.78) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item (ii), 76(80), 9(9.47), 4(4.21) and 6(6.31) were got for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item (12) the following were responses obtained for 6 (6.31), 14(14.76), 17(17.89) and 58(61.05) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed.

On item (13), the following responses were got; 81(85.26), 10(10.52), 3(3.15) and 1(1.05), 3(3.15) and 1(1.05) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed

On item (15), responses got show 84(88.42), 7(7.36) 3(3.15) and 1(1.05) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, and strongly disagreed. On item (16), responses got were, 6(6.31), 3(3.15), 14(14.73) and 72(75.78) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed

The average weight of the research question two however, shows that the average rating scale of four ( $X = 2.5$ ) is greater than the mean of average rating scale of four ( $X = 2.61$ ). The findings however, reveals that Adult mass literacy programme could reduce recruitment drive of people to join Boko-Haram insurgent in Northern Nigeria.

## Discussion of Results

The result of research one which says that Adult mass literacy programme could equip people with employability skills in Northern Nigeria. This align with the submission of Erinsakin (2014) [7] that security challenges, such as, kidnapping, banditry, human rituals, and so on are caused majorly by joblessness. Further, it reveals that most adults and youths who are insurgents join the deadly group (Boko-Haram) sect because of their unemployment status. Akinbi(2015) [3] opinion further buttresses the results that the state of kidnapping and insecurity challenges orchestrating by Boko-Haram insurgency in Nigeria is partly caused by lack of skills to engage and relevant in labour market, thus, buttresses an adage that says that " an idle mind is the devil workshop". The opinions above on the results on research question is a true picture of factors responsible for recruitment of youths and adult as members of Boko-Haram insurgency in Northern, Nigeria.

The result on research question also reveals that Adult mass literacy programme could reduce recruitment drive of Boko-Haram insurgents in Northern Nigeria. The result is in consonance with the view and opinion of Atoi (2022) [4] that Boko-Haram insurgents are mostly illiterate who cannot read and write, thus, hinders their understanding of Boko-Haram philosophy, "Western Education" is evil and deceit and can destroy Islamic values. Sarumi (2001) [12] maintain that illiteracy is a bane to critical thinking and making rational

decision, thus, many insurgents illiteracy level informed their willingness and readiness to be unleashing fear, create tension and destroying the security apparatus of the country, Nigeria.

In a nutshell, adult mass literacy programme is an antidote and impetus to reduce recruitment drive of people as member of Boko-Haram insurgents in Northern, Nigeria.

### Conclusions

Based on the findings Mass Adult Literacy programming give people literacy skill (reading, writing and computing) thus, enhances market values of individuals. Besides, the programs could reduce. Mass recruitment of people to Boko-Harm sect.

### Recommendations

Recommendations were made based on the result that;

1. Government should establish Mass Adult Literacy Centre's in Northern, Nigeria. So that people can easily have access to literacy education.
2. Government should educate people in Northern Nigeria on benefits of being literate to oneself and society. This can be done through the media.
3. Government should carryout empowerment programme for the people, especially, the youths do defer from joining Boko-Haram on the ground of joblessness
4. Government should provide adequate resources for sustainability of Mass Adult Literacy programme in Northern, Nigeria.
5. Government should orientate public on the consequential negative effects of security challenges to socio-economic development of citizenry and the country.
6. Government should strategy of reaching people, either individuals or groups in Northern, Nigeria for facilitation of literacy skills.
7. There should adequate and tight security at Mass Adult Literacy program centres to make it safe for teaching and learning, and so on.

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