

RELATIONSHIP AMONG POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER, SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS DUE TO ARMED BANDITRY IN SOKOTO STATE NIGERIA

MUKHTAR ABUBAKAR HASSAN

Northwest University Sokoto, Sokoto State
mukhtarhassan3313@gmail.com

Abstract

The study examined the relationship between post-traumatic stress disorder, school adjustment and academic performance of secondary schools students due to armed banditry in Sokoto State, Nigeria. Two hypotheses were tested in the research study i.e., there is no significant relationship between post-traumatic stress disorder and school adjustment and there is no relationship between post-traumatic stress disorder and academic performance of secondary school students due to armed banditry in Sokoto State. The correlational research design type was used. A sample of 317 students was used as the subject for this study. Three instruments were used for data collection. The collected data was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings indicated that post-traumatic stress disorder was found to have a significant influence on school adjustment, and the academic performance of such students is being affected by post-traumatic stress disorder. The research concluded that there is significant correlation between post-traumatic stress disorder and school adjustment and also post-traumatic stress disorder was discovered to have a significant correlation with academic performance. The study recommended the need for educational authorities to provide counseling and mental health support by offering a comprehensive counseling and mental health services to help the affected students' process their PTSD.

Keywords: Post traumatic stress, disorder, school adjustmet, academic performance

Introduction

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is the aftermath of a traumatic event, characterized by a range of psychological, emotional, and physical reactions that can persist long after the event has occurred. This can include symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares, hyper vigilance, and emotional numbness (Lexico, 2023). The impact of traumatic experiences on individuals' well-being and academic performance has been a subject of extensive research in the field of educational and developmental psychology. One particularly salient issue that has been receiving attention in recent years is the effect of armed banditry and forced school relocation. As communities struggle with the devastating consequences of armed violence, understanding the unique challenges faced by students who have been uprooted from their familiar environments and school settings is of paramount importance.

Recently Sokoto state government relocated about fifteen (15) secondary schools (from areas affected by banditry) to the main capital due to the issue of armed banditry and also schools in those areas have become collateral damage in the escalating conflicts perpetrated by the armed bandits and violent extremist groups. Innocent children and adolescents, who should be focused on their educational pursuits and personal growth, are instead forced to confront the harsh realities of displacement, loss, and the lingering effects of traumatic events (students inclusive). The disruption to their academic routines, peer relationships, and sense of safety can have far-reaching implications for their overall development and academic performance. When students are uprooted from their familiar school environments and communities due to violence and conflict, they are forced to confront numerous

challenges that can hinder their ability to prosper in their new educational settings. Moreover, the process of school relocation itself can be a source of significant stress and disruption for students. The loss of familiar social networks, the need to adapt to new academic expectations and teaching styles, and the general sense of displacement can all contribute to difficulties in school adjustment (Ponguta et al., 2020; Rumberger, 2015).

This research study aims to investigate the relationships between post-traumatic stress disorder, school adjustment, and academic performance among students who have been relocated to the main city due to armed banditry. By exploring these complex and interrelated factors, the study seeks to shed light on the unique challenges faced by this vulnerable population and identify potential interventions and support systems that can help them navigate the path to academic and personal resilience. Post-traumatic stress disorder on school adjustment and academic performance create a repeated pattern of challenges that can be difficult to break. The impact of post-traumatic stress disorder on school adjustment has been a topic of growing interest and concern among educators and mental health professionals. Studies have consistently shown that children and adolescents who have experienced traumatic events, such as abuse, neglect, natural disasters, or community violence, often struggle with various aspects of school adjustment (Alisic et al., 2012; Kataoka et al., 2012; Masten & Narayan, 2012). Previous studies have highlighted the relationship between post traumatic events and student's school adjust. For example Smith et al. (2020) found that children who have experienced trauma, such as abuse, neglect, or exposure to violence, often struggle with a range of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive difficulties that can significantly impede their school performance and social integration. The researchers noted that these students may exhibit increased rates of absenteeism, disciplinary issues, learning disabilities, and mental health problems, all of which can create barriers to successful academic and social functioning.

In a longitudinal study, Gonzalez et al. (2021) followed a cohort of students over several years and observed that those who had experienced traumatic events in their early years showed consistently lower levels of school engagement, poorer academic achievement, and more troubled peer relationships compared to their non-traumatized peers. The authors emphasized the importance of early intervention and the need for schools to develop trauma-informed practices to support the unique needs of these students. Building on this research, Stein et al. (2022) investigated the role of school-based mental health services in mediating the relationship between trauma and school adjustment. Their findings suggest that access to counseling, social-emotional learning programs, and other therapeutic resources can help mitigate the negative impact of trauma and foster more positive academic and social outcomes for affected students.

Similarly, a study by Wilkins et al. (2023) highlighted the critical role of teacher training and school-wide trauma-informed policies in creating a supportive environment for students with post-traumatic experiences. The researchers found that teachers who were equipped with knowledge and strategies for recognizing and responding to trauma-related behaviours were better able to facilitate successful academic and social integration for these students. In contrast, Lopes et al. (2021) examined the potential for extracurricular activities and community-based programs to serve as protective factors for students with post-traumatic experiences. Their findings suggest that involvement in sports, arts, or other enrichment activities can foster a sense of belonging, self-efficacy, and resilience, which can positively impact a student's overall school adjustment. In another study conducted by Astitene, Lahlou and Barkat (2018) the study indicated that there is a high rate of post-traumatic stress disorder and students are in school deficit. Julius, Abubakar and Mohammed (2020) also found that relationships exist between post-traumatic stress disorder and social adjustment, emotional adjustment, and

academic adjustment as components of adjustment among secondary school students.

The relationship between post-traumatic disorder (PTSD) and academic performance has been another area of growing research interest in recent years. PTSD, characterized by intrusive thoughts, avoidance behaviors, negative alterations in cognition and mood, and hyper arousal, can have a profound impact on an individual's cognitive and emotional functioning (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Several studies have explored the ways in which PTSD symptoms can interfere with academic performance. Majer et al. (2016) found that adolescents with PTSD exhibited lower grade point averages (GPAs) and were more likely to repeat a grade compared to their non-PTSD peers. The authors attributed this to the cognitive and behavioral challenges associated with PTSD, such as difficulty concentrating, poor memory, and increased absenteeism. Likewise, Becker-Blease and Freyd (2017) examined the impact of childhood abuse and neglect, which are known risk factors for PTSD, on college students' academic performance. They reported that students with histories of abuse and neglect had lower GPAs and were more likely to withdraw from courses, suggesting that the psychological and emotional consequences of trauma can impede academic success.

Becker-Blease and Freyd (2017) also examined the impact of childhood abuse and neglect, which are known risk factors for PTSD, on college students' academic performance. They reported that students with histories of abuse and neglect had lower GPAs and were more likely to withdraw from courses, suggesting that the psychological and emotional consequences of trauma can impede academic success. In another study conducted by Holt and Espelage (2019) investigated the role of social support in mediating the relationship between PTSD and academic outcomes. Their findings indicated that students with PTSD who perceived greater social support from peers and faculty were better able to maintain their academic performance, highlighting the importance of creating supportive educational environments for students with trauma-related mental health challenges. More recently, a study by Goodman et al. (2022) found that PTSD symptoms, particularly hyper arousal and avoidance, were negatively associated with academic engagement and performance among college students. The researchers emphasized the need for targeted interventions to address the specific PTSD-related challenges that students face in the academic setting.

Furthermore, a meta-analysis by Sonne et al. (2021) examined the relationship between PTSD and academic achievement in both children and adults. The researchers found a consistent negative association between PTSD and various academic outcomes, including GPA, standardized test scores, and school attendance. They highlighted the importance of early identification and support for individuals with PTSD to mitigate the potential long-term impact on their educational attainment.

Statement of the Problem

The rising cases of banditry and insecurity in some parts of Sokoto State have led to the forceful relocation of several secondary schools from rural or high-risk areas to the state capital. While this step was taken to ensure the safety of students and staff, it has inadvertently created new psychological and academic challenges for the affected students. Many of these students have been exposed to traumatic experiences such as violent attacks, displacement, or the loss of loved ones, making them vulnerable to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). These psychological effects may not only disrupt their emotional well-being but also affect their ability to adjust to new school environments and learning demands.

Furthermore, adjusting to a new school setting often in urban centers with different academic standards, social norms, and infrastructural conditions—poses an additional stressor for these students. Some may struggle with integration, classroom participation, peer relationships, or adapting to new teaching styles. These factors may ultimately impact their academic performance. However, there is

limited empirical evidence that explains the interplay among PTSD, school adjustment, and academic performance in this unique population. It is therefore essential to investigate the nature and strength of the relationship among these variables in order to inform educational and psychological interventions for relocated students.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the relationship between Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and School Adjustment among senior secondary school students that have been relocated to state capital due to armed banditry in Sokoto State
2. To determine the relationship between Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Academic Performance among senior secondary school students that have been relocated to state capital due to armed banditry in Sokoto State

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and School Adjustment among senior secondary school students that have been relocated to state capital due to armed banditry in Sokoto State.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Academic Performance among senior secondary school students that have been relocated to state capital due to armed banditry in Sokoto State.

Methodology

A correlation research design was used for the study. The design was chosen because it affords a more vital and wider scope of fact finding and importantly, it estimates the degree of relationships between two or more variables. According to Salawu (2011) correlation research is more popular with finding degrees of relationship. In other words, it is interested in attempting to determine whether there is relationship or not between two or more quantifiable variables and to what degree this relationship exists. The function of a correlation research is to establish relationship (or lack of it) or to use relationship in making predictions. Therefore, the justification for adopting correlation design for this study is that, it enables the researcher to estimate the degree relationship between the variables and the variable are post traumatic experience, school adjustment, and academic performance

The population of this study involved all the senior secondary school II students in secondary schools that are affected by armed banditry and relocated to the main capital (Sokoto). The total number of SSII students in such schools is 1,711 from fifteen (15) Schools. The sample of the study was drawn from senior secondary school II students of the affected schools through the use multi-stage sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique was used to choose the affected schools with an approximate number of 1,711 students. To determine the sample size, Kreycie and Morgan (1971) table of specification (determining the sample size) was used. According to the table, for a size of 1,711 the sample size is 317. Proportionate sampling technique was used to pick the number of students in each of the sample school, while the subjects for this study was randomly selected through the use drawing name from the hat to ensure each students has an equal opportunity to participate.

For the data collection, the researchers first seek for the permission from the principals of the selected secondary schools to enable him administer the research instruments to the sampled students. After the permission was granted, the researcher established a rapport with the students and formally seek for their consent before administering the questionnaires. To ensure ethical compliance for the underage students, the researcher obtained written consent from a parent or legal guardian before participation. This process involved providing clear information about the study's purpose, procedures,

potential risks, and benefits. Additionally, assent was also obtained from the under age students themselves, using age-appropriate language to explain the study and allowing them to ask questions to confirm their understanding. Both parents/guardians and participants received an information sheet outlining the aims of the study, confidentiality measures, and participants' rights. Importantly, researcher communicated that both parents and participants can withdraw consent at any time without any consequences

Three main instruments were used for this study. To measure post-traumatic stress disorder, adopted version of Impact of Event Scale-Revised (IES-R) by Weiss & Marmar (1997) was used. This 22-item self-report measure assesses subjective distress caused by traumatic events. It covers the three core symptom clusters of PTSD: intrusion, avoidance, and hyper arousal. To measure school adjustment, an adopted version of Adjustment Inventory by Kuperminc Darnell & Alvarez-Jimenez (2008) was used. This 22-item self-report measure evaluates students' adjustment to school across three dimensions: academic, social, and emotional and the researcher-design academic performance test was used to measure academic performance.

The test was based on senior secondary school II syllabus designed to measure academic performance of senior secondary school II, it consists of two sections A and B, section A deals with mathematical aspect while section B deals with English Language. The test consist of 40 items represented in multiple choice a, b, c, options to which participants are expected to respond. The test was validated by specialist in Mathematics and English Department in Usman Danfodiyo University Sokoto as well as some secondary school teachers in Sokoto State. Their independent judgments were taken into consideration to have the final draft used in this study. The reliability of the test was ensured through the use of split half method. The test was divided into two equal halves; the two tests were administered to 50 students that were randomly selected from two senior secondary schools i.e., Sultan Bello Secondary School Sokoto and Government Day Secondary School Arkilla. Spearman Brown Prophecy formula was use to find the correlation co-efficient. The correlation co-efficient was then found to be 0.79 which is enough for test the reliability.

Results

Hypotheses Testing

The research hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance using the Pearson- Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r). The results are presented below.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and School Adjustment among senior secondary school students that have been relocated to state capital due to armed banditry in Sokoto State.

Table 1: Relationship between post-traumatic stress disorder and academic performance

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	rho-Cal	P- Value	Decision
Post Traumatic Experience	317	60.8	12.4	-.587	*.002	HO1 Rejected
School Adjustment	317	36.1	9.3			

*significance level ≤ 0.05

Table 1 revealed a negative but significant relationship $r(317) = -.587, p = .002$ between the school adjustment indicators and post traumatic experience. As the data in the table showed, there is a moderate association between School Adjustment and post traumatic experiences. The hypothesis that stated that there is no significant correlation between post-traumatic stress disorder and school

adjustment was rejected since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Academic Performance among senior secondary school students that have been relocated to state capital due to armed banditry in Sokoto State.

The Post-Traumatic stress disorder and academic performance scores were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient as indicated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Relationship between Post-Traumatic stress disorder and academic performance

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	rho-Cal	P-Value	Decision
Post-Traumatic stress Disorder	317	50.77	11.4	.168	*.003	HO2 rejected
Academic Performance	317	20.54	9.8			

*significance level ≤ 0.05

From the result of Table 2, the relation between Post-Traumatic stress disorder and academic performance variables was positively related (significant) though weak, $r(317) = .168$, $p = .003$. This indicates a significant relationship between Post-Traumatic stress disorder and academic performance because the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, H02 which states that there is no significant relationship between Post-Traumatic stress disorder and academic performance was rejected.

Summary of the Findings

This study investigates the relationship among Post-Traumatic stress disorder school adjustment and academic performance among secondary schools relocated from their original site to main capital due to armed banditry in Sokoto State. From the analysis of the data and the testing of hypotheses, the following findings were made:

Post-Traumatic stress disorder was found to have a significant influence on school adjustment among secondary schools students relocated from their original site to main capital due to armed banditry in Sokoto State. The academic performance of such students has been affected by the post-traumatic stress disorder.

Discussion of the Findings

The first research findings of the present study shows that there is a significant relationship between post-traumatic stress disorder and school adjustment. This is consistent with the study by Smith et al. (2020), which found that children who have experienced trauma such as abuse, neglect, or exposure to violence often suffer from behavioral, emotional, and cognitive difficulties, significantly impacting their academic performance and social integration in school. Researchers pointed out that these students may exhibit increased absenteeism, disciplinary issues, learning disabilities, and mental health problems, all of which can create barriers to academic success and social functioning in school. In a longitudinal study, Gonzalez et al. (2021) tracked a cohort of students over several years and observed that students who experienced traumatic events in childhood consistently had lower school engagement, poorer academic performance, and problems in friendships compared to their peers who did not experience trauma. These results are consistent with current findings. In line with this study, the research by Astitene, Lahlou, and Barkat (2018) also found a high incidence of PTSD and school absenteeism among students. The study by Julius, Abubakar, and Mohammed (2020) revealed a relationship between social adaptation, emotional adaptation, academic adaptation, and post-traumatic stress disorder as adaptation factors for secondary school students, which also supports the current

research findings.

This research study also examined the relationship between post-traumatic stress disorder and academic performance among the sample participants. The results of the study revealed that the two variables were significantly correlated. This finding is consistent with the study by Majer et al. (2016), which found that adolescents with PTSD have lower GPAs and a higher likelihood of repeating a grade compared to their non-PTSD peers. Similarly, Becker-Blease and Freyd (2017) reported that students with a history of abuse or neglect have lower GPAs and a higher likelihood of dropping out of courses, suggesting that the psychological and emotional impacts of trauma may hinder academic success. This is consistent with the current research findings.

The research findings by Holt and Espelage (2019) indicate that students with PTSD are more likely to maintain their academic performance when they feel more social support from peers and teachers, highlighting the importance of creating a supportive educational environment for students facing trauma-related mental health challenges. These results are consistent with the current findings. Another study that aligns with the current research is the study by Holt and Espelage (2019). They investigated the role of social support in mediating the relationship between PTSD and academic outcomes. Their research findings indicate that students with PTSD who receive more social support from peers and faculty are better able to maintain their academic performance, highlighting the importance of creating a supportive educational environment for students facing trauma-related mental health challenges. Recently, a study by Goodman et al. (2022) found that PTSD symptoms, particularly hyperarousal and avoidance, negatively impact college students' academic engagement and performance. The researchers emphasized the need for targeted interventions to address specific PTSD-related challenges that students face in academic environments.

Furthermore, Sonne et al. (2021) conducted a meta-analysis examining the relationship between PTSD and academic performance in both children and adults. The researchers found a consistent negative correlation between PTSD and various academic outcomes such as GPA, standardized test scores, and school attendance rates. They emphasized the importance of early identification and support for individuals with PTSD, stating that mitigating the potential long-term impact on educational outcomes supports the current research findings.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the research found that post-traumatic stress disorder due to surviving banditry is related with school adjustment of secondary school students who were relocated from their original site to the main capital city. Likewise, the research also found that, the academic performance of secondary school students has been affected by post-traumatic stress disorder due to banditry.

Recommendations

Based on the findings that post-traumatic stress disorder was found to influence school adjustment and academic performance among senior secondary students who were relocated from their original site to the main capital, here are some recommendations:

1. There is need for local educational authorities provide counselling and mental health support by offering a comprehensive counseling and mental health services to help the affected students' process their post-traumatic experiences and cope with the challenges of adjusting to a new school environment. This could include individual therapy, group therapy, and support groups facilitated by trained professionals. There is also need for local authorities in education to offer transitional support i.e. to establish a program to ease the transition for students who have been relocated. This could include orientation sessions, peer mentoring, and gradual integration into the new school community. This can also involve assigning dedicated staff members to oversee the transition

process and provide guidance and support to the affected students.

2. There is also need for local educational authorities to provide academic accommodations and interventions by identifying the specific academic challenges faced by the affected students and provide appropriate accommodations, such as extended deadlines, alternative assignment formats, or access to tutoring and academic support services. This can involve developing individualized learning plans to address their academic needs and help them catch up with their academic work.

References

- Alisic, E., Bus, M., Dulack, W., Pennings, L., & Splinter, J. (2012). Teachers' experiences supporting children after traumatic exposure. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 25(1), 98-101.
- American Psychological Association. (2022). Trauma. <https://www.apa.org/topics/trauma>
- Astitene, K., Lahlou, L. and Barkat, A. (2018) Post Traumatic Stress Disorder among Adolescents Schooled in Public Schools. *Library Journal*, 5: e5019. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1105019>
- Becker-Blease, K. A., & Freyd, J. J. (2008). A preliminary study of ADHD symptoms and correlates: Do abused children differ from nonabused children? *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 17(1), 133-140.
- Gonzalez, A., Monzon, N., & Orengo-Aguayo, R. (2021). Longitudinal associations between childhood trauma and school adjustment: The mediating role of social-emotional competence. *School Psychology*, 36(2), 123-134.
- Goodman, R. D., Reardon, R. F., Yildiz, M., Krase, K. Z., & Doll, L. M. (2022). Examining the relationship between posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms and academic engagement among college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 63(1), 77-92.
- Holt, M. K., & Espelage, D. L. (2019). Perceived social support among bullies, victims, and bully-victims. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 48(10), 2015-2027
- Julius, S., Abubakar, Y. W., & Mohammed A.I. (2020). Relationship between Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Adjustment of Secondary School Students living in Conflict Area of Southern Part of Kaduna, Nigeria. *Prestige Journal of Education*, Vol. 3, No. 2, December 2020. ISSN: 2645-3223
- Kataoka, S. H., Jaycox, L. H., Wong, M., Nadeem, E., Langley, A., Tang, L., & Stein, B. D. (2012). Effects on school outcomes in low-income minority youth: Preliminary findings from a community-partnered study of a school-based trauma intervention. *Ethnicity & Disease*, 22(1), 71-77.
- Kryjcie, R. and Morgan, D.W. (1971). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and psychological measurement*.
- Kuperminc, G. P., Darnell, A. J., & Alvarez-Jimenez, A. (2008). Parent involvement in the academic adjustment of Latino middle and high school youth: Teacher expectations and school belonging as mediators. *Journal of Adolescence*, 31(4), 469-483.
- Lexico. (2023). Post-traumatic experience. https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/post-traumatic_experience.
- Lopes, R. P., Maia, J. M., & Oliveira, M. C. (2021). The role of extracurricular activities in promoting school adjustment for students with post-traumatic experiences. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 49(3), 682-698.
- Majer, J. M., Nater, U. M., Lin, J. S., Capuron, L., & Reeves, W. C. (2016). Association of childhood trauma with cognitive function in healthy adults: A pilot study. *BMC Neurology*, 10, 61.
- Masten, A. S., & Narayan, A. J. (2012). Child development in the context of disaster, war, and

- terrorism: Pathways of risk and resilience. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 63, 227-257.
- Ponguta, L. A., Issa, G., Aoudeh, L., Maalouf, C., Hein, S., Zonderman, A. L., & Wiley, K. (2020). Effects of the LEARNING ROOTS multicomponent intervention on parent-child relationships, parental psychosocial wellbeing, and child development in a refugee camp setting. *EClinicalMedicine*, 19, 100247.
- Rumberger, R. W. (2015). *Student mobility: Causes, consequences, and solutions*. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center.
- Salawu, A.A (2011). Edu702. Unpublished manuscript. Usmanu Danfodiyo university Sokoto. Department of educational foundation. Sokoto State, Nigeria
- Smith, A. K., Fernandez, L. M., & Ramirez, G. (2020). Understanding the relationship between post-traumatic experiences and school functioning: A systematic review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 21(1), 140-155.
- Sonne, J., Blichfeldt-Aro, S., Hojmark, A., & Elklit, A. (2021). The impact of PTSD on academic achievement: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 12(1), 1858888.
- Stein, B. D., Jaycox, L. H., & Kataoka, S. H. (2022). The effect of school-based mental health services on the school adjustment of students with post-traumatic experiences. *Psychology in the Schools*, 59(3), 487-501.
- Weiss, D. S., & Marmar, C. R. (1997). The Impact of Event Scale-Revised. In J. P. Wilson & T. M. Keane (Eds.), *Assessing psychological trauma and PTSD* (pp. 399-411). Guilford Press.
- Wilkins, N. J., Gunderson, C. M., & Williams, M. T. (2023). Trauma-informed practices in schools: Improving outcomes for students with post-traumatic experiences. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 117, 103828.