Terrorism and female teacher leadership in girls’ secondary school

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore female teachers and vice principal’s leadership on girls attendance and learning, safety and security issues in rural girls’ schools experiencing Boko Haram insurgencies. The secondary purpose is to recommend innovative educational policy initiatives at the school, community and state levels, so as to ameliorate girls and teachers’ challenges, and to sustain girls in schools.

Design/methodology/approach – Qualitative educational research orientation and an ethnographic-narrative research design were used for the study. Purposeful sampling procedure was adopted through the selection of female teachers and a vice principal. Soft qualitative oral data (SQOD) were collected from structured interviews and focus groups and participant observation data. Data analysis engaged hand data analysis (HAD) for transcription, while the coding and theming process involved qualitative computer software data analysis (CSDA) of NVivo 8.0. The measures of validity involved the qualitative process of member checking, while ethical issues of anonymity with participants were addressed in the process of data collection, and reporting.

Findings – Major findings revealed a symbiotic relationship between female teacher’s moral leadership and the application of law of tort in the girls’ school; teachers’ adopted spiritual leadership and moral decision making process on girls’ safety, and learning motivation; and improved school community collaboration for security and safety of the girls and effective communication.

Practical implications – Educational policy options are prescribed. They include the training of teachers and girls on fire safety and conflict crisis; recruitment of female school counsellors; housing incentives for female teachers; support grassroots initiatives on school security; and sustaining school-community/parents involvement.

Originality/value – Boko Haram’s impact on teacher and school leadership in girls’ school(s) has not been studied so far. The paper is the first, thereby filling the gap of the literature on girls’ rural education and terrorism.

Keywords Educational policy, Female teacher leadership, Girls education, Terrorism

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Global progress on female education are indicators of human development for the most are monitored by UN agencies as the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) and other UN affiliates. Indeed, current “Out-of-school” data of adolescents in lower secondary school age in Sub-Sahara Africa revealed 12 million girls from West and Central Africa as the only regions in the world where the numbers increased from 11 million to nearly 13 million since 2000 (UNESCO, 2015, p. 6). When compared to global northern nations, the progress of developing nations of Sub-Sahara Africa’ is significantly low, thereby questioning why and how are Sub-Saharan countries “left behind” in female/girls’ education, despite UN Ouagadougou Declaration on girls’ education, financial support from global agencies as World Bank among others (UNESCO, 2015). Hypothetical facts have been generated on the setbacks of girls’ education in developing countries, particularly with the
rise of Islamic terrorism. Nations as Pakistan, and Afghanistan in South Asia are most hit by the rise of the Taliban (Quraishi and Doran, 2014), and in West African nations of Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, the Jama'atul ahl al-sunnah li da'awati wal jihad (JAS) or Boko Haram, currently designated as Islamic State of West Africa Province (Withnall, 2015; Muir, 2015). Boko Haram is considered the deadliest organisation in the world, considering the statistics and frequency of people killed by the group, which surpasses that of ISIS in Syria (Delman, 2015). Global terrorism analysts conclude that Boko Haram is more violent against women and girls than ISIS or any terrorist organisation in the world by using girls of all ages as suicide bombers (Faul and Umar, 2016; Delman, 2015; Osborne, 2016; Searcey, 2016), making their lives worthless. Boko Haram’s opposition on female/girls’ education is a violation of the girls’ fundamental human rights on education (Ogoloma and Sampson, 2015).

The paper is a report of female teachers’ and a vice principal’s leadership and challenges in a girls’ secondary school, currently hosting some of the escaped kidnapped Chibok school girls of north eastern Nigeria. The paper examined past experiences of teachers’ supposed standard care (Tort Liability Law (TLL)) for the girls that was breached during the process of kidnapping by Boko Haram, and how the experience can be prevented through proper teacher leadership and school management practices in the girls’ present school, and in the future. The paper concludes with policy options that may be considered for implementation.

2. Rationale of kidnapping school girls by Boko Haram
There is a gap in the literature on why Boko Haram kidnapped the Chibok school girls in north eastern Nigeria, partly due to the timing, and limited published research reports on the phenomenon.

Understanding Boko Haram terrorists is to explore the meaning of their name. It is a terrorist organisation, whose name means “Western education is forbidden” in Hausa language (a lingua franca spoken across West African region) (Adamu, 2009; Murtada, 2013). Even though the sect dislikes been referred as Boko Haram, they believe the name is leaning and appealing to the “west” (Abang, 2017) than the Islamic/Arabic name of the sect JAS (Walter, 2014).

Nefarious activities of Boko Haram involves the kidnapping of students and teachers, and burning of schools. They established their notoriety on 14 April 2014, when they kidnapped 276 boarding school girls, and burned down classrooms at the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, a rural town of north eastern Nigeria (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Sapa-AP, 2014). They kidnapped the school girls in disguise of been guards “providing security” (Human Rights Watch, 2014). In a Boko Haram video presentation, which was first obtained by Agence France-Presse, their leader Abubakar Shekau admitted the abduction of the girls by stating “I abducted your girls […]” (Abubakar and Levs, 2014, p.1).

The world was not only shocked and angry at the violent behaviour of the terrorist against the kidnapped school girls and their families, but wondered why Boko Haram kidnapped the school girls. To understand the purpose of their act, a cursory examination of the groups’ philosophy on the female gender and education are briefly explored.

2.1 “Protect” girls from western values/indoctrination
Boko Haram believes that girls must be protected from western indoctrination acquired through formal schools' planned curriculum and systemic practices of coeducation (mixing boys and girls) (Nossiter, 2015). They believe that if girls obtain western knowledge, they will be westernised in their thoughts and behaviour (Murtada, 2013). Boko Haram despise western education due to the belief that western curriculum is in conflict to the epistemologies of the
Quran, and will mislead females. The founder of the sect Mohammed Yusuf in July 2009 stated thus: “YES, western education is forbidden. Any type of knowledge that contradicts Islam, Allah does not allow you to acquire it” (Smith, 2015, p. 220). Furthermore, the founder of the terror group criticised the lapses of western curriculum thus, “Such education spoils the belief in one God. [………..] Like rain, we believe it is a creation of God rather than an evaporation caused by the sun that condenses and becomes rain. Like saying the world is sphere. If it runs contrary to the teachings of Allah, we reject it. We also reject the theory of Darwinism” (Boyle, 2009, p. 1).

Boko Haram share similar philosophy on female education with the Taliban of Afghanistan and Pakistan on coeducation of schools; they noted, “[…] if a girl does not conform to the traditional ideals of a secluded female and attends school in a public space, many families worry about the repercussions of challenging traditional norms” (Kavazanjian, 2010, p. 43). Like Boko Haram, extremists as Tenzeem Islami Al-Furqan of the Pangjur district of Pakistan documented their beliefs against girls’ education on pamphlets as thus:

Haram (prohibited) in Islam, not only should boys and girls be segregated in school, but they should not even learn English. The English language is a vehicle to introduce Western values in Pakistan, and thus dangerous to learn. English is considered particularly dangerous for female students, as it can corrupt their moral principles. TIF actually invites parents to enroll their daughters in public schools, which teach only Urdu (Pakistan’s official language). The Islamic extremists also circulated a threatening pamphlet warning parents to keep their daughters away from English language centers. (Majhar-Barducci, 2014, p. 1).

To disseminate their threats further, Tanzam-ul-Islam Furqan uses a cell phone network through the Al Furqan News with the following message for teachers and schools. “Warning: The decision has been made now. If a single female student was seen being taught by you or in your institute then we swear in the name of Allah that it will be obligatory on us to kill you. Tanzeen ul Islami ul Furqan” (Durrazai, 2014, p. 1). These threats weakens the survival of girls’ schools, their attendance and participation in schools, as well as sustaining girls’ educational policies in countries with terrorist organisations. In addition, the terrorists’ threats may limit and prevent western-based NGOs that promote girls’ education from providing resources and financial assistance to countries with terrorist groups.

However, it is significant to note that terrorists claim against female education is contrary to the teachings of the Quran, which clearly instructed Muslims (men and women) to seek and pursue knowledge as a duty, and to read-Iqra (Hamid, 2011; Shahbaz, n.d.).

2.2 Girls as wives and for early marriage

Boko Haram beliefs and values on girls is that they should be married from the early age of nine so as to fulfil their earthly role as wives, and mothers (Murtada, 2013), and not be in school (Lister, 2014; Nossiter, 2015). This notion was reiterated in a video by the sects’ leader Abubakar Shekau, who stated thus, “Let me tell you – I took those girls, who were in western education. Girls go and get married. I repeat. I took the girls […]. We are against western education, and I say stop western education” (Thornhill et al., 2014). The statements do not only “justify” why the school girls were kidnapped, but explains part of their parochial social philosophy on the role of females and female education, as well as confirm the meaning of their name Boko Haram or western education is forbidden.

2.3 Girls as market commodities

One rationale of kidnapping the school girls by Boko Haram was for “economic” purpose. First, to generate income from the “sales” of the school girls, which they deem as “market commodities”, as commented in a video by Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau,
“I abducted your girls I will sell them in the market, by Allah”. The leaders’ statement was affirmed in the media with some of the kidnapped school girls “sold” as brides to Boko Haram Islamist fighters for the cost of 2,000 Naira (£7.50) per each girl (Heaton, 2014). This act of violence is not only reducing the human dignity of the girls’ to mere commodities or products, but re-echoes the past slave market economy (Ewing et al., 2002). Indeed, critics believe that “selling” the kidnapped school girls and other girls is one out of the many ways of raising funds to meet the immediate financial needs, and sustaining Boko Haram’s daily operations (Heaton, 2014).

3. TLL and the kidnapping of the Chibok School Girls

Teachers and principals are often held accountable in performing their duties and responsibilities as service providers and civil servants. As part of teaching duties and obligations, teachers are required to implement the hidden curriculum of caring for students within the school compound (Parkay et al., 2012). These expectations of teachers in the performance of their duties can best be associated with part of moral leadership in schools (Sergiovanni, 2005).

In addition, formal and legal frameworks of teachers in performing their duties and responsibilities are referenced in educational school law as the TLL, defined as, “an individual who is negligent and at fault in the exercise of his or her legal duty [...] a breach of duty as in negligence” (Parkay et al., 2012, p. 118). TLL is subdivided into three categories, with the first part referred as Negligent Tort Liability Law, which means – harm done to people generally through the failure of another to exercise a certain level of care, usually defined as a reasonable standard of care (Alexander and Alexander, 1992 cited by Dryer, n.d; INVESTOPEDIA, n.d.). Negligence is only one aspect of how the law impacts on the practice of teachers and their responsibilities to students (Newnham, 2000, p. 50). The author stated aspects of teacher negligence in schools; teachers have a duty of care to students and to provide adequate supervision for them. The second element of negligence found in cases against educators occurs when teachers fail to exercise a standard of reasonable care, and therefore, breach their duty to protect the well-being of students (Newnham, 2000, p. 50). Similarly, a factor that helps to determine the standard of reasonable care exercised by a “reasonable” teacher includes the proximity (presence or absence) of the teacher in charge (of the students) (McCarthy and Cambron-McCabe, 1992; cited by Dryer, n.d., p. 8). The duty of care extends to children not only during school hours but also outside school hours where the students are on school property (Newnham, 2000, p. 47).

In addition to the TLL is the stand of teachers as loco parentis, which requires them to take appropriate action to protect students from unreasonable risks of harm, and act as parents to the students in school (Parkay et al., 2012). In loco parentis means “in the place of a parent”, a doctrine that originated in English law. William Blackstone related this principle to educators in his 1770 compilation of English law (Zirkel and Reichner, 1987; cited by Thorn, 2015, p. 29). Teachers serve as substitutes for parents while students are at school and unable to protect themselves, thus school personnel are charged with the protective custody of children (Thorn, 2015, p. 28).

Are the teachers, principal and vice principal of Government Girls Secondary School Chibok negligent in their duties of care for the safety and security of the girls? Did the girls receive adequate supervision of the teachers and vice principal in the course of the kidnapping by Boko Haram? To respond to these questions, an examination of the literature on the role of the principal, vice principal, teachers and the state during the course of the girls’ kidnapping are explored.

According to Amnesty International (Africa), they claim to be informed by several local people that the Nigerian military in Maiduguri (capital of the north-eastern
Borno state of Nigeria) were informed of the impending attack on Chibok town soon after 19:00 local time on 14 April 2014. It says that a local official was contacted by herdsmen, who said that armed men had asked them where the Government Girls’ Secondary School was located in the town (BBC Africa, 2014a, b). In addition, Macdonald and Omisore (2014) stated that “among the locals who sounded the alarm were civilian patrols set up by the military in a neighboring village triggered a chain of phone calls the evening of April 14, after they noticed unidentified armed men on motorbikes heading toward Chibok where the schoolgirls were later abducted, according to sources” (p. 1). In addition, Amnesty’s Africa director Netsanet Belay said “It amounts to a gross dereliction of Nigeria’s duty to protect civilians, who remain sitting ducks for such attacks. The Nigerian leadership must now use all lawful means at their disposal to secure the girls’ safe release and ensure nothing like this can happen again” (Macdonald and Omisore, 2014, p. 1).

Narrating the complicity of the school authority on the kidnapping of the school girls, Bunu (2016) stated:

On 17 April 2015, the principal of GGSS Chibok told the AP [Associated Press] that she was present when Boko Haram came to evacuate the girls, and that she even encouraged the girls to board the trucks because she thought Boko Haram were Nigerian soldiers. She claimed that it was when Boko Haram started looting and destroying things in the school that she knew they were Boko Haram. She added that one soldier and a policeman who were deployed at the school were killed by Boko Haram, and that her granddaughter was also abducted. But on 27 April 2014, she told the PN that she was in Maiduguri for medical checkup when the abduction took place, and that no security personnel were deployed in the school. She added that her daughter was not abducted. None of the daughters or wives of the teachers and management staff was abducted by Boko Haram. (p. 1)

The conflicting narratives of the principal further complicates the truth of the matter, as well as revealed poor leadership communication skills of the principal, which may arise as a result of the fear of attack by Boko Haram, as well as the emotional state or shock of the kidnapped girls. However, when confronted by the then president of Nigeria on the missing girls, the principal confirmed the second story of been away to the state capital (Maiduguri) to attend to her health. If the second narrative is the correct one, the question remains: did the principal delegate responsibilities and duties of caring of safety and protection of the girls to the vice principal as part of chain of command in school administration? Many of the parents of the kidnapped girls that granted interviews to the local press/media believe the principal of the school did not. An investigative journalism on the role and position of the vice principal during the kidnapping of the girls revealed the contrary. Akinshilo (n.d.) stated:

Parents of more than 200 schoolgirls abducted suggested that the vice principal (academic) of the school had prior knowledge of the plot to kidnap the girls. Some parents who spoke with Sahara Reporters claim that the role of the vice principal was at least questionable, adding that their daughters were made vulnerable to Boko Haram kidnappers. A mother of one of the abducted girls stated that Vice Principal had told the schoolgirls that any one of them who failed to sleep in the school the night of the abduction would be expelled as a student of Government Girls Secondary School Chibok. (p. 1)

Even though the vice principal was demonstrating duty of care on compulsory attendance as required by TLL, which states that “Duty of care is associated with compulsory attendance requirement enforced on a daily basis. Children are required to attend school and obey rules while they are there. Mandated school attendance forces parents to rely on school personnel to protect their children both at school and at school activities” (Thorn, 2015, p. 30). This legal requirement of school attendance presents an increased duty on school
personnel for the safety and welfare of students (Thorn, 2015, p. 30). However, the vice principals’ autocratic leadership of control and intimidation on the girls’ compulsory attendance forced them to comply, and eventually became vulnerable, to Boko Haram kidnappers.

It is also significant to note that the vice principal’s positional power as a male father figure played a key role on the girls complying with his orders and threats of expulsion from school. The gender and age relationship between the male vice principal and the girls forced them to respect and comply with the orders of the vice principal, regardless of the situation at hand, thereby making the girls powerless. It is significant to note that, the vice principal is a male elder, making him not only a “loco parentis” and a father figure to the girls, who must be respected and obeyed as required by culture and traditions of the community. In sum, culture, ageism, gender difference and positional role of the vice principal enforced the girls’ to remain in the school compound on the night of their kidnapping because they had a choice to leave to their homes and return the next day to write their exams, since it was exam period in the school.

Some Chibok parents and stakeholders theorized a conspiracy. A distraught mother of one of kidnapped school girls accused the vice principal and possibly other staff of conniving with Boko Haram as thus “Our concern is that since the day of [the girls’] abduction, we have never set our eyes on the vice principal. He is on the run” (Akinshilo, n.d., p. 1). In addition to teacher conspiracy, some parents of the kidnapped girls stated, “However, none of the teachers’ daughters or even the daughters of the management staff was among those kidnapped. Only the children of we poor people were asked to sleep in the school. The teachers and administrators had kept their children in safer places before Boko Haram arrived because they know the terrorists are coming” (Akinshilo, n.d., p. 1). The comment of the parents are not only an expression of the distrust of the teachers and management of the school, but explains how most of the parents believe that the school took advantage of their low socio economic status, which, in essence, aligns with social justice issues in education.

A father of an abducted girl also criticised what he characterised as the federal governments’ levity in dealing with the abduction of the school girls as stated, “We have lost confidence in the Nigerian government’s reaction to our missing children. Nobody asked any questions to the teachers. In fact they are moving free in the cities and towns. Why has the government not investigated any of the teachers?” (Akinshilo, n.d., p. 1).

The legitimate comments of these hurting parents challenge the neglected administrative responsibilities, that have not been addressed. The parents are crying for justice, and they believe that the teachers did not perform their duties of protecting, caring and ensuring the safety of their girls as required and expected of them as locoparentis (Thorn, 2015). The comments of the parents not only challenge the teachers and vice principals moral leadership of ensuring adequate care of safety and security of their girls, but that the teachers, principal and vice principal should be held accountable/liable for the kidnap of their girls, which, unfortunately, the federal government, and the State Ministry of Education, has completely ignored or are yet to do so. Parents of the kidnapped girls believe that their low socio-economic status and low literacy level are reasons why the government is ignoring their quest investigate the teachers and the principal and the vice principal; they also believe their rights to advocate for their girls has been supressed.

Out of the 279 girls that were kidnapped by Boko Haram, 59 escaped, in addition to 21 that have recently been released by Boko Haram after Switzerland, and the Red Cross brokered a deal with the terror group. The paper explores the current schooling experiences of a sample of Chibok girls that escaped, and their teachers’ current leadership strategies amongst others in a neighbouring school within proximity to the Government Girls Secondary School Chibok.
4. Research procedures
Prior to this report, a qualitative research orientation was undertaken. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) stated, “Qualitative researcher’s study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3). In addition, an ethnographic-narrative design was adopted, with the aim of examining what is happening in a particular setting, together with the participants’ perspectives of these events (LeCompte and PREissle, 1993). Furthermore, Creswell (2015) added on the vantages of using the design, “Ethnography allows the participants to narrate their stories or lived experiences” (p. 521). The applications of ethnographic design in educational settings are inclusive of classrooms, informal and formal educational settings (Church, n.d). A narrative design was also adopted for the qualitative study, narrative research “are produced and performed in accordance with socially shared conventions, they are embedded in social encounters- they are part and parcel of everyday work of participants; they examine ways in which social organizations and institutions are constituted; and they express authority and expertise of the researched and the researcher” (Atkinson and Delamont, 2006, p. 21). To enable an understanding of how teachers “express their authority and expertise” in time of crisis, the design was adopted so as to listen to participants’ “personal narratives” of their experiences. On the advantages of narrative designs in education, Creswell (2015) added, “[…] it allows the researcher(s) a theoretical lens or structure for advocating for groups or individuals […] the narrative researcher provides a voice for seldom heard individuals in educational research” (p. 515). The justification of using the aforementioned research designs was not only due to the advantages on the participants to express themselves and tell their stories (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003), but due to the designs’ reachability, time flexibility and, above all, the ability to bring the researcher and the researched closer (Woolcot, 2009).

4.1 Sampling procedures
A purposeful sampling procedure that targets specific participants as a result of their experiences, availability and connection to the phenomenon investigated (Creswell, 2015) was adopted. The samples included ten grades 9 and 10 escaped Chibok school girls, four female teachers, one vice principal academic, six parents of the sample girls, and from three families in a village close to Chibok (n = 21). All participants of the study live within proximity to Chibok community that experienced Boko Haram school kidnapping, arson and killings as demonstrated in Figure 1.

4.2 Research questions
The study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1. How do female teachers provide care to the girls in the current school?

RQ2. What moral leadership styles are demonstrated by female teachers and the vice principal/principal?

RQ3. How do female teachers monitor compulsory attendance and participation of girls in school?

RQ4. What safety measures are currently provided in the school?

RQ5. What are the role and duties of the state ministry of education in ensuring safety and security of schools and the girls? and what are the challenges so far?

RQ6. How are parents of the kidnapped girls and the community been involved in school governance?
These research questions were also adopted as part of the structured interview questions for the participants (Creswell, 2015).

4.3 Data collection process
Primary “soft” data were collected from face-to-face and focus group (FGs) interviews with the girls, vice principal and female teachers at a government girls’ secondary school in proximity to Chibok town. The merits of (FGs) of allowing members to share, prompt and remind each other of their lived experiences in the course of their narratives (Creswell, 2015). When qualitative data are collected first, the intent is to explore the topic with participants at sites (Creswell, 2015, p. 212; cited by Masada, 2012, p. 63), and justify the selection of the technique. Other data were sourced from participant observation of the girls’ on school sites as classrooms, compound, dormitories, security gate entrances, while additional observations were conducted of the town road networks to Chibok village, and its proximity to Sambisa forest hideout of Boko Haram. These observations were undertaken with the purpose of understanding the extent to which security issues were breached during the course of kidnapping of the girls. These undertakings further allowed more “researcher’s” field notes to be taken (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 2015). For safety and security reasons, the location and identity of the school is excluded in this paper.

4.4 Ethical consideration
It was addressed by, first, obtaining verbal and written consent of all participants in English and Hausa (local lingua franca of northern Nigeria) languages. Also, institutional permission was sought from the state ministry of education, and the girls’ school used for the study. The process of data collection, analysis and reporting of the study addressed participants’ anonymity and confidentiality, by assigning pseudonyms to disguise and protect their “true” identities for safety and security reasons. A major beneficence of the study to the
participants is that of “providing them an opportunity in the cause of data collection process to express their opinions, a means of giving them a “voice” (Creswell, 2015) as a marginalised and oppressed group by Boko Haram.

4.5 Data analysis procedures
Soft oral data were analysed through transcription and using hand data analysis (HAD), while the process of coding and theme generation involved NVivo 8.0 qualitative software. A measure of validity was applied through the process of member checking “a process in which the researcher asks one or two more participants to check the accuracy of the account” (Creswell, 2015, p. 252). Hence, the vice principal and two girls of the study were provided with the transcript data for the process of member checking.

To support the analysis, citations of pertinent literature related to terrorism and schooling are analysed and re-situated in the context of the discussion. The process allowed the affirmation of social impact of terrorism on schooling of girls and teacher practices in schools, and the general educational sector in most south developing countries.

4.6 Theoretical framework
This is based on the moral leadership theory (MLT), as it relates to the female moral leadership (FML). MLT is a theory built around moral dimension and ethics as purpose, values and beliefs that can transform a school from just an organisation to a community (Sergiovanni, 2005, p. 103). The author further explains the importance of justifying emotion and getting in touch with basic values and connections with others. Ladkin (2008, cited by Hu et al., 2015) believed that “good moral leadership has three main dimensions: Master – understanding of self and the environment, Coordination – all forms of self, purpose and consistency in terms of information, and Purpose – a certain goal achieved. He considered that good moral leadership should play a role in the moral aspects of a leader’s efforts, and question whether guided by the purpose of working hard for people’s best interests of living conditions” (p. 2). Specific to females (FML), Sergiovanni (2005) stated that female principals need to feel free to be themselves, rather than following (strictly) the principles and practices of traditional management when practicing moral leadership. FML of schools are characterised by leadership behaviour of sensitivity, empathy, nurturing and caring (Lumby et al., 2010, p. 30). The theory explores moral decision making process of intuition, cooperation and accommodation by female leaders and teacher participants of my study. FML characteristics are grounded to the African traditional philosophy on female moral leadership application of female value systems of traditional roles and expectations in communities or organisations. Sucher (2010) cited an example of traditional female leadership role actions of Ellen Sirleaf, the Liberian President. Hence, the theoretical framework is presented in the discussion of the findings, as well as educational policy options.

5. Findings and discussion
Major findings illustrate how participants’ understanding of teacher leadership roles and practices were informed by both professional expectation and personal traditional values of their roles and duties, which guided their leadership practices. Major themes include a symbiotic relationship between female teacher’s moral leadership and the application of law of tort in schools; teachers’ use of spiritual leadership in dealing with girls’ emotions and trauma; teachers’ application of moral decision making for girls’ safety and learning motivation; and effective community school collaboration for school safety and security of the girls.
Most teacher participants emphasised, and practiced, the ethics of care as part of moral teacher leadership, which is required of them in the school legal framework of law of Tort – as the provision of “standard care” for students (girls) on the school compound. One female teacher, who had been promoted to the position of a vice principal commented:

Haven’t had the experience at the last school in Chibok, when the girls were kidnapped by Boko Haram, and I have heard comments of parents, I have taken it as my duty to model care for my girls. I frequently monitor and supervise teachers, and inspect the activities of the girls around the school every three hours, thereby, putting the female teachers on duty on their toes, because I can call on them at any time to demand updates of what is going on around the school compound. (Interview Transcript Folder ITF No 15:1/5/2015)

The above comment is a demonstration of leadership networking between the school head and the teachers, which is required in school law and leadership. Gilligan et al. (1988, p. 17, cited by Quick, 2013) commented on leadership and networking, “From the perspective of [a leader] seeking or valuing care, responsiveness or engagement, a resiliency of connection that is symbolized by a network or web are constantly observed” (p. 131).

The task of an educational leader is the constant review and evaluation of current practices and structures, and where needed, the establishment of new practices and structures that will create the intended climate, culture and, in turn, community of the school (Quick, 2013, p. 135).

Teacher participants of the study revealed constant supervision of the girls’ by taking attendance before and at the end of classes. They also take attendance of the girls outside the classrooms, in dining halls, sports ground, dormitories, etc.; this will enable them to account for every girl, and to ensure the safety and location of the girls on the school ground. The teachers added:

We teachers take regular attendance of the girls; sometimes we do that through cell phone calls to the girls outside class time. All the girls have cell phones. Their parents bought them one to keep track of them, and the teachers also use the phones to keep track of the girls. We call them before their dinner time, after dinner time and bed times, despite the fact that some of us are schedule for after class duties of supervising the girls’ activities. Because we have problem of stable power in the school compound, the school principal and the management have improvised local car batteries in each dormitory unit where the girls can recharge their cell phones, with the supervision of girl prefects and the monitoring of dormitory matrons, so as to ensure safety against burns or fire outbreak. (Focus Group Interview Transcripts File No. 10.21, 2/52015)

The leadership behaviour expressed by teachers’ supervision of the girls’ safety in absentia and by remote is an ethical responsibility that focusses on the primacy of building connections/relationships, and understanding the interrelatedness of all stakeholders within the school community, thereby building positive school climate and culture (Quick, 2013). Teachers are not only regulating students’ attendance and care on safety, but creating and sustaining effective communication between the girls and themselves, as well as including parents or members of the community. The teachers added:

As part of the new school policy, every weekend, we call parents of the girls on their cell phones to assure them of their daughters’ safety in school. We also encourage the girls to constantly send to their parents’ texts or phone calls. In addition, we respond promptly to parent’s phone calls and messages of inquiry regarding their daughters. This mode is open, and improves parent-teacher trusts, accountabilities, and transparency (Focus Group Interview Transcripts File No. 10.22, 2/52015).

Riehl (2000) concludes that school leaders and teachers’ inclusive practices must promote and build connections between schools and communities, and building positive relationships outside the school. The teachers’ open communication with parents of the girls fosters invitation of the parents to participate in school governance, i.e. parent teacher
association meetings and conferences, disseminates information to parents on ways they can be involved in school improvement activities, which fosters a positive collaboration (Leithwood and McElheron-Hopkins, 2004).

Teacher participants and the leadership admit using spiritual leadership in the course of calming emotional anxieties, depression, motivating courage and strength, and leadership skills for the girls. The teachers added:

From the request of the girls’ parents, community elders and village heads, we organize spiritual activities as fellowships and prayers for the girls, so as to strengthen them, and to assist them deal with their fears, emotions, depression and anxieties. This strategy is to ensure the religious values and beliefs of the community are honored and respected in the school and for the girls. The decisions of the parents’ were communicated to the school principal and the ministry, who in turned approved organising spiritual extracurricular activities for the girls, so as to improve their morale. In addition, we do not have trained teacher counsellors in our rural schools, most of them are posted in urban areas (Focus Group Interview Transcripts File No.11.18, 2/52015).

The above excerpts confirms the notion that practices of leadership are guided by values influences of faith on leadership practice (Strachan et al., 2009; cited by Striepe et al., 2014, p. 91). In understanding educational leadership, it is often associated with practices that can be derived from either “an ethic of care, faith and morality” (Dantley, 2005, p. 18; cited by Striepe et al., 2014, p. 93). In another dimension, Sergiovanni (2005) added that leadership is not derived from bureaucratic agencies but rather the combined ethos of personal faith and school’s affiliated faith or a “sacred authority” (p. 12). Hence, teachers’ implementation of spiritual leadership in a girls’ school is not only promoting the communities values and beliefs system, but providing the parents a voice, which, by implication, is an act of social justice (Riehl, 2000), and maintaining social aspects of school improvement matters (Leithwood and McElheron-Hopkins, 2004).

Teachers and school leadership participants’ practiced open communication with parents and community leaders. The communication praxis facilitated strong partnership on issues of school compound security and safety of the girls. The vice principal added:

The principal and I have signed a verbal and written contract with the community village head and chairman of the local Joint Task Force (JTF), a task force that is made up of local vigilante group and monitored by the Nigerian military. The contract allow for school-community collaboration/ partnership on school security. Members of the JTF are posted all day to provide security to the school. They are armed in case of any Boko Haram surprise attack. The service of the community is provided to the girls school free of charge, which the school management is grateful, and in return makes sure that their daughters are not only protected from any form of harm within the school compound (Interview Transcript Folder ITF No. 16:1/5/2015).

Brown and Duku (2008) reiterate how African traditions have shaped how parents participated in school governance practices, imbued by tension between values inherent in African traditions/customs, and values of modern school policies/legislations. Culturally, it is the “duty” of any significant male of the family to ensure their sister or female relative is provided “protection” against other males outside the family unit at all times in Northern Nigeria (Murtada, 2013). This unwritten but practical cultural “code of conduct” is extended to school girls, especially more after the Boko Haram attack. Participants of my study, i.e. parents and members of the village community, use every means within their reach to ensure their daughters are well protected and safe in schools. The level of community and parents’ engagement in school governance on safety does not only interrogate their social identities, but dwells on their cultural beliefs and practices that are respected by school management. Brown and Duku (2008) stated “how parents participate in school governance can provide clues regarding their self-interest, or lack thereof. Parents have their own beliefs, customs and traditions and may also have to
make similar adjustments in school governance” (p. 434). The parent-school partnership “[…] is a clear indication that some element of shared, collaborative, or distributed leadership is strongly associated with effective leadership in schools” (Brown and Duku, 2008, p. 434).

The study’s observational data revealed male youth serving as security guards, older male parents provide local arms (bows and arrows, hunter guns, etc.) to the security providers, and meeting their financial needs, while female parents volunteer to cook meals and serve the local security male guards of the school. The community collaboration and cooperation promote greater support for the school.

Provision of grassroots security network for girls’ school by members of the community resonates with Bourdieu’s social practice theory “that draws attention to the issue of habituated activities of ordinary living of people through socialization […] so as to gain authority and power, and internalize the habitus” (i.e. the culture) (1992, cited by Brown and Duku, 2008, p. 438). Since parents bring various bodies of knowledge, understanding and belief systems to the school culture and governance, the habitus (the culture of school governance) provides a key means of understanding their lived experiences (Brown and Duku, 2008, p. 438).

The contributions of parents and members of this rural community does not only respect and address issues of diversity and inclusion, but “improves group performance because the full potential of everybody is used; creates higher morale, and better relationships in the group; […] and leads to freer discussion” (Brown and Duku, 2008, p. 446).

6. Educational policy options

Girls’ educational policies across countries experiencing terrorism can only be effective if “girl friendly” implementation initiatives are undertaken. The former Prime Minister of Britain, and UN Special Envoy on Global Education, Mr Gordon Brown, reiterated that girls’ education in the face of terror requires and educational emergency on girls’ safety, access, participation and completion of their education in south countries (Tickle, 2015). The interpretation of educational emergencies means a focus on policy innovations that will work ahead of terrorists as Boko Haram. The paper suggests innovative educational policy practices for girls’ schools and stake holders in the mist of terrorism attack by Boko Haram, and other terrorist groups around the world.

6.1 Establishing and sustaining safe school initiative (SSI)

The initiative was recently adopted and established by the UN global education unit in collaboration with federal government of Nigeria, after the kidnapping of Chibok school girls. Brown and Brown (2014) added:

We have now got 2,400 students from three states successfully enrolled in safe schools […] In Nigeria, I’ve met teachers, and they know that 196 of their colleagues have been killed in the last year or two. It’s not unusual for a teacher to be abducted from their home, never to be seen again.

We have to stand up for teachers. We’ve got to recognise that this is not just a challenging job that requires courage in the classroom, but it’s also dangerous and requires bravery to confront people who may wish to stop children getting educated (p. 1).

It is a common practice that change in government affects the continuity of policies and implementation, and the education sector has suffered the most in Nigeria. Hence, sustaining the SSI is paramount; it can be achieved through monitoring practices by external stakeholders as the UN Special Unit on Global Education, Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI), DFID, UNICEF and UNIFEM. To ensure SSI, periodic school inspection and supervision (Adedeji and Olaniyan, 2011) of girls’ schools are necessary. This will detect tear and wear structures that require immediate attention, and to avoid creating loopholes for external invaders as Boko Haram to the school compound.
6.2 Recruitment and deployment of female teacher counsellors
States experiencing Boko Haram invasion of schools should as a matter of urgency recruit and deploy trained teachers (Adedeji and Olaniyan, 2011), especially female teacher counsellors. Part of their duties is to assist girls on how to manage their psychological and emotional challenges, and to motivate girls’ learning (International Alert, 2016; Olamilekan, 2014). Female counsellors will also serve as mentors, and facilitate the girls’ to academic success (Carter and Evans, 1995). Specific to girls’ schools, female counsellors would be most effective as they serve not only as professionals, but counselling them on developmental issues as menstruation, which sometimes comes with emotional and physical challenges that interfere or even prevent them from attendance and participation in school activities (Grant et al., 2013). It is significant to note that girls’ school attendance has fallen since the kidnap of the Chibok school girls (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Teachers are conscious of the drop in attendance, and work hard to regain the school attendance of girls, whatever the challenges. It is also their duty and responsibilities under the school law of Tort to ensure the care of girls’ on school attendance, as well as use effective strategies to sustain attendance, or else they will be implicated for negligence.

6.3 School improvement of physical structures
States should provide safe school plant or structures for girls’ protection and safety. The school classrooms and dormitories should be visible to teachers and principal, so as to monitor girls’ safety. On school building safety, Dorn et al. (2014) added “[…] entryway is designed so that staff members inside the building can easily observe visitors. This type of natural surveillance also depends on staff maintaining visibility through windows” (p. 6). In addition, school management and teachers should ensure a clear registration of all visitors in girls’ schools. Dorn et al. (2014) added “Pleasant but clear signage can help let visitors understand that they need to stop and sign in as they enter the school” (p. 12).

Girls’ schools should have strong physical structures as gates, walls and security lightings and fittings to wade off intruders as Boko Haram. As noted by Newnham (2000), “negligence of school authorities may arise where the grounds or equipment are unsafe and a student is injured. School authorities have a non-delegable duty to students to ensure that reasonable care is taken for the safety of children at school” (p. 46). Hence, safe lightings as solar panels should be installed for continuous supply of power in girls’ schools.

6.4 Fire drills/training for girls and teachers
Arson is one of the weapons of mass destruction by Boko Haram, where they torch classrooms and dormitories as they did in Chibok girls’ secondary school (Human Rights Watch, 2016). To prepare girls and teachers against arson, fire drills and training should be provided (Samoy, 2014). Teacher leaders should be selected as leaders during fire training and drills, as commended by Rachlin (2017) that, “Identify leaders. Realistic drills may be a good opportunity to identify individuals who […] can respond to [fire] crisis. Identifying unexpected leaders and bringing them into the emergency planning process can be a real asset” (p. 1). The training will reduce casualties in case of arson of school structures, and it will arm the girls on strategies to protect themselves as well give them life skills they can use after school and in their communities. Brown noted, “We used to think that what was preventing children getting an education was the lack of facilities, the lack of teachers, the lack of money […] but we have to take into account that unless we can make schools safe, we are not delivering genuine opportunity to children who are frightened to go to school” (Tickle, 2015, p. 1).
6.5 Housing incentives for female teachers
To retain and attract more female teachers and counsellors in rural girls’ schools, non-financial incentives as provision of housing in the school compound are crucial. This was evident in a study of rural Malawi to boost female teacher’s morale, as well as increased deployment into rural schools (Adedeji and Olaniyan, 2011). Other non-financial rural incentives for the teachers working in conflict crisis areas may include special study leave or better training opportunities (Craig et al., 1998; Gaynor, 1998, cited by Adedeji and Olaniyan, 2011, p. 74). In addition, state should introduce financial incentives to these rural teachers to increase their work motivation. For this to be effective, teacher unions at the local chapters must fight for the inclusion of these incentives, as well as ensure regular payments of salaries of teachers, which is one of the challenges of serving teachers across Africa (Adedeji and Olaniyan, 2011).

6.6 Support of grassroot school security initiative
State government must support the efforts of grassroot security initiatives of the Joint Task Force (JTF) in rural schools, especially girls’ schools around Chibok. As a security policy, states should ensure the posting of military and police personnel to support the security of JTF. Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) added “Policy or programme can only be successful through the collaboration and involvement of the community, by appointing community members as school board members. As members of the school’s board, they will be able to monitor and supervise the school and teachers; they can serve as “early warning system” if facilities of the school are deteriorating […] and give adequate recognition to teachers’ accomplishments” (p. 77).

Nigeria’s existing educational policy on girls’ education requires innovative policies, considering the threats of Boko Haram against female education. Even when policy initiatives are developed, local communities, teachers and parents must be on board to ensure an effective implementation of the new policies, so that girls can develop their potentials through education.

7. Conclusion
The paper explored female teacher leadership in the context of terrorism in a girls’ school in north eastern Nigeria. A synopsis of Boko Haram’s philosophy of education on female schooling was explored. The paper briefly elucidated the implication of educational laws of TLL of negligence of teachers and school administrators on the kidnapping of Chibok school girls, by relying on documented opinion of the kidnapped girls’ parents and community members in media interviews. Research preambles on qualitative research methods, and ethnographic-narrative designs were presented. The data collection process derived from structured interview, FG interviews and participant observation were explained, while process of data analysis through the HAD technique, and computer assisted analysis of Nvivo for coding and theme generation were explained. Major findings and discussions were highlighted and substantiated with select literature, as well as excerpts of the participant’s interview and observational data to provide them a voice in the paper. The paper summated with educational policy options or initiatives which particularly addressed the school safety of the girls and their teachers in areas of school structures, teachers and girls training on safety in times of emergency attack, facilitate community/parent-schools collaboration initiative by state security provision of regular school inspection of school plant, and teachers job appraisal for motivation amongst others.

In sum, the management of girls’ schools and educational policies requires a moral duty by all involved. The experience of Malala Yousufzei and other school attending girls in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and recently the kidnapped Nigerian Chibok school girls by Boko Haram, incited more global attention on what can, and should be done, for girls in
developing countries facing terrorist attack for wanting to get education as a right. Certainly, the returned Chibok school girls and other girls who escaped from Boko Haram terrorists, and have returned to continue their education, require support systems from the state, and affiliated agencies locally and across the world (International Alert, 2016). The world must embrace moral responsibilities of supporting the fight against terrorist abuse on girls’ education, so that girls can experience and exercise their right to education, not only for their civility, but to contribute their knowledge and skills as world’s primary human capital.

References


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Further reading


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