

INFLUENCE OF INSECURITY ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY STUDENTS IN SOUTHERN KADUNA SENATORIAL DISTRICT, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

VAKPA, iliya^{1*}, Ahmed Abdullahi Rabo², KANA, Aishatu Sani³

*Correspondence: VAKPA, iliya

^{1,2,3}Department of psychology, Nasarawa state university keffi, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of insecurity on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in the Southern Kaduna Senatorial District of Kaduna State, Nigeria. Driven by worsening regional security indicators evidenced by dwindling WAEC English Language pass rates (25% in 2021, 46% in 2022, and 42% in 2023) the study isolated four core dimensions of insecurity: kidnapping, insurgency, cultism, and communal crises. Grounded sociologically in Durkheim's Anomie Theory and psychologically in Lazarus and Folkman's Stress and Coping Theory, the research examined how macro-societal failures and micro-level psychological trauma intersect to compromise educational productivity. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The target population comprised 44,565 Senior Secondary School II (SS2) students across 154 public secondary schools in eight Local Government Areas. Using a multistage sampling procedure and the Taro Yamane formula, a sample size of 528 respondents was selected. Data collection was executed using the validated "Influence of Insecurity Questionnaire" (IIQ), which demonstrated strong content and logical validity indices (0.79 and 0.83). Hypotheses were analysed using a Multiple Correlation Matrix (Pearson r) at a 0.05 level of significance. The empirical results revealed that all four security variables maintain a statistically significant, negative relationship with students' academic achievement ($p < 0.05$). Insurgency demonstrated the strongest negative correlation ($r = -0.71$), followed closely by kidnapping ($r = -0.68$) and communal crises ($r = -0.55$), while cultism exerted a moderate negative pull ($r = -0.42$) against the baseline academic performance ($t\{\text{Mean}\} = 62.30$, $\{\text{SD}\} = 7.89$). The study concluded that persistent exposure to these multi-layered environmental threats compromises the school calendar, induces cognitive hypervigilance, and severely cripples educational outcomes. It is recommended that the Kaduna

State Ministry of Education fortify school perimeters, establish trauma-informed counseling units, enforce strict zero-tolerance anti-cultism policies, and invest in crisis-resilient distance learning platforms to ensure academic continuity.

Keywords: Insecurity, Kidnapping, Insurgency, Cultism, Communal Crisis, Academic Achievement.

Introduction

Education stands as an indispensable asset for both developing and developed nations, serving as a powerful tool that enables individuals, groups, and the human race to explore, understand, and develop their environments. It is a liberator, empowering citizens from the clutches of ignorance, prejudice, superstition, and manipulation. Consequently, education is rightly regarded as the key to national development, shaping character, promoting worthwhile values, and fostering social harmony. The crucial and multifaceted roles of education in the advancement of individuals and society cannot be overstated, meaning that factors affecting students' well-being, particularly their home and community environment, invariably influence their academic achievement. An educated individual gains a broader perspective, promoting tolerance and social cohesion, which are foundational for a thriving society.

Academic achievement refers to the level of success an individual or student attains against established educational standards, typically assessed through performance in schools, colleges, or universities (Nichons, 2020). It is a vital indicator of a student's preparedness for future challenges. In Nigeria, the level of academic success among secondary school students has become a significant source of concern for education stakeholders, as national development heavily relies on it. Poor academic achievement, defined as the failure to reach a set standard in an evaluation exercise (Okeye, 2019), has been on the rise. Academic achievement is a multifaceted construct, measured by various indicators ranging from procedural and declarative knowledge and grades to cumulative indicators like educational degrees and certificates (Tenina, 2013). These metrics, which reflect intellectual capacity, play a critical role in determining an individual's educational and vocational future, and are essential for a nation's wealth and prosperity (Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2014).

The concern over poor academic performance is particularly acute in the Southern Kaduna Senatorial District, where student achievement in senior secondary schools is currently dwindling. Concrete statistics from the Zonal office in Kafanchan underscore this alarming trend, especially in English Language WAEC results: in 2021, 25% passed and 75% failed; in 2022, 46% passed and 54% failed; and in 2023, 42% passed and 58% failed. This persistent failure rate is increasingly being linked to the devastating impact of insecurity in the region. Students and teachers face constant fear of harm due to threats like kidnapping, cult-related issues, and communal crises. The safety of students is paramount,

and a secure school environment is essential for effective teaching and learning. However, the breakdown of the security system has become a major hurdle, with reports of teachers being abducted, causing students and residents to abandon their homes and schools out of fear (Ihanachor cited in Nwosu, 2018).

Insecurity, defined as the absence of safety, lack of protection from danger, and a state of fear or anxiety (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014; Beland, 2015), directly militates against quality academic achievement. This study focuses on several forms of insecurity plaguing the region: Kidnapping, characterized by unlawful seizure for ransom, has become endemic and affects students and teachers alike (Obinna, 2017). Insurgency, which involves organized violence against government authority, creates a climate of fear, leading to school attacks, displacement, and constant disruption of the learning process (UNICEF, 2021; UNESCO, 2018). Communal crises confrontations between parties result in the death or displacement of educators and students, decreased access to school, and increased teacher absenteeism (Miller cited in Oludare, et al., 2015). The most embarrassing problem is the aggressive menace of cultism, which breeds violence and negatively affects the image and integrity of schools (Osagie, 2017; Adewale, 2015).

The pervasive and multifaceted security challenges, including kidnapping, cultism, insurgency, and communal crisis, present a clear and urgent threat to the academic progress of secondary school students in Southern Kaduna. The constant threat of violence, coupled with the psychological trauma experienced by students in conflict zones, severely affects their concentration, motivation, and overall academic performance (Fazel & Danesh, 2002). School closures, curfews, displacement, and the subsequent destruction of educational infrastructure and teacher absenteeism collectively contribute to the sharp decline in academic achievement. Given this critical backdrop, this research became necessary to investigate the influence of insecurity specifically, kidnapping, cultism, insurgency, and communal crisis—on the academic achievement of secondary school students in select public schools within the Southern Kaduna Senatorial District of Kaduna State.

Statement of the Problem

Insecurity significantly undermines the academic achievement of secondary school students in the Southern Kaduna Senatorial District, Kaduna State, Nigeria. Despite efforts by the government to improve education quality, poor academic performance persists, especially in English Language, evidenced by worrying WAEC failure rates (e.g., 75% failure in 2021). The pervasive insecurity, marked by ethno-religious clashes, insurgent activities, attacks on schools, abductions, and displacement, creates a climate of fear that severely disrupts the learning process. This disruption manifests as absenteeism among students and teachers, the destruction of infrastructure, and psychological trauma that impairs students' cognitive and emotional well-being. Furthermore, the high

insecurity level, including kidnappings, sexual assault, and cultism, has caused school closures and deserted communities, leading to teachers opting for reposting or avoiding school, all of which heavily affect teaching and learning, making a study on this influence necessary.

Research Questions

- i. What is the influence of kidnapping on academic achievement of secondary school students in Southern Kaduna Senatorial Districts, Kaduna State?
- ii. What is the influence of insurgency on academic achievement of secondary schools students in Southern Kaduna Senatorial Districts, Kaduna State?
- iii. What is the influence of cultism on academic achievement of secondary school students in Southern Kaduna Senatorial Districts, Kaduna State?
- iv. What is the influence of crisis on academic achievement of secondary school students in Southern Kaduna Senatorial Districts, Kaduna State?

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of insecurity on academic achievement of secondary school students in southern Kaduna senatorial district, Kaduna State.

- i. To determine the influence of kidnapping on academic achievement of secondary school students in Southern Kaduna Senatorial Districts, Kaduna State
- ii. To determine the influence of insurgency on academic achievement of secondary school students in Southern Kaduna Senatorial Districts, Kaduna State
- iii. To determine the influence of cultism on academic achievement of secondary school students in Southern Kaduna Senatorial Districts, Kaduna State
- iv. To determine the influence of crisis on academic achievement of secondary school students in Southern Kaduna Senatorial Districts, Kaduna State

Statement of the Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 significant levels:

- i. There will be a significant influence of kidnapping on academic achievement of secondary schools' students in Southern Kaduna Senatorial Districts, Kaduna State
- ii. There will be a significant influence of insurgency on academic achievement of secondary schools' students in Southern Kaduna Senatorial Districts, Kaduna State
- iii. There will be a significant influence of cultism on academic achievement of secondary schools' students in Southern Kaduna Senatorial Districts, Kaduna State
- iv. There will be a significant influence of crisis on academic achievement of secondary school students in Southern Kaduna Senatorial Districts, Kaduna State

Conceptual Framework.

Insecurity

The worsening insecurity in Nigeria has become a nationwide crisis, causing citizens to lose their peace of mind and making the security of lives and property a major concern for all community and institutional leaders. Security, broadly defined as all measures designed to protect and safeguard the citizenry against violent occurrences (Ogunleye, et al, 2021) and ensuring freedom from psychological harm (Achimba and Ighomereho, 2023), is now highly unpredictable, suggesting that the nation's security architecture is overwhelmed. This situation translates directly into an absence of safety and freedom from danger (Dibu, 2015), creating a "state of threat to life" characterized by fear and anxiety.

security encompasses all structural, policy, and physical measures designed to safeguard the citizenry against violent exigencies (Ogunleye et al., 2021), while simultaneously guaranteeing an environment free from psychological distress, vulnerability, and threat (Achimba & Ighomereho, 2023). Presently, the highly volatile and unpredictable nature of Nigeria's internal security paradigm suggests that the state's security architecture is severely overstretched. This institutional deficit translates directly into a profound absence of safety and freedom from danger (Dibu, 2015), engineering a chronic, life-threatening state of fear, hypervigilance, and systemic anxiety. Within the educational sector, this pervasive atmosphere of terror acts as a severe impediment to realizing the foundational goals of secondary education as articulated in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2004).

The nexus between environmental security and secondary education is absolute; the optimization of students' cognitive and academic development is fundamentally contingent upon a safe, tranquil, and protective learning ecosystem. When the security perimeter of an educational institution is breached, the lives of students, instructors, and administrators are placed in immediate peril, dismantling the pedagogical rapport and cognitive stability required for effective teaching and learning. School-based insecurity can be broadly classified into external threats (such as insurgency, kidnapping, and communal crises) and internal threats that gestate within the school premises (such as bullying, institutional theft, and cultism). Cultism—defined as a secret, cloistered assemblage of individuals operating with clandestine motives and deviant behavioral norms (Onuma, 2017)—constitutes an exceptionally malignant internal threat that has tragically infiltrated virtually all public secondary schools within the Southern Kaduna Senatorial District, resulting in fatal consequences and the loss of student lives. Consequently, regularizing and reinforcing school security networks remains a matter of

paramount, non-negotiable interest to state authorities, host communities, and educational stakeholders.

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement denotes the specific margin to which a student, educator, or institution fulfills short-term and long-term educational objectives, such as the successful acquisition of secondary school diplomas or baccalaureate degrees. Narad and Abdullah (2016) conceptualize academic achievement as the scholastic proficiency gained or the predefined educational benchmarks attained by learners over a designated instructional timeframe, typically quantified through continuous assessments and formal examination metrics. In a similar vein, Yusuf et al. (2016) characterize academic achievement as an observable, measurable, and standardized behavioral output exhibited by a student within a specific period of study, operationally monitored using localized evaluation metrics including classroom exercises, pop quizzes, mid-term tests, take-home assignments, and mock examinations.

Within the contemporary Nigerian educational matrix, secondary school performance is adjudicated through these continuous internal evaluations in tandem with high-stakes summative examinations administered by external bodies, most notably the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), the National Examinations Council (NECO), and the National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB). While scholastic achievement is historically multi-causal—governed by confounding variables such as chronological age, parental socio-economic status, school infrastructure, teacher quality, and pedagogical resources—the overarching safety and psychological security of the school environment remain paramount. When environmental stressors or violence compromise the learning arena, the predictive validity of these academic assessments often shifts, reflecting trauma rather than pure aptitude. Therefore, understanding these background dynamics is critical as this study isolates and operationalizes distinct dimensions of insecurity to determine their specific empirical influence on the academic achievement metrics of secondary school students within the Southern Kaduna Senatorial District of Kaduna State.

Empirical Review

Kidnaping and Academic Achievement

Jamila (2014) conducted an investigation on the effect of kidnapping on academic performance of secondary school students in Tafawa balawa, Bauchi state. The study sample consists of 308 secondary school students, including 147 (47.7%) and 161 females (52.3%) who completed the instrument. Using a well validated instrument, data for the study were collect. Independent t-test analysis was used to analyze the data collected for the study. The result showed that kidnapping has a significant influence on students' academic achievement of secondary school students in Tafawa

Balewa. This review is relevant to this study because it has identified kidnapping as being responsible for failure of students in schools and creates fear in them and students who lack confidence are timid, reluctant to express their opinion in the school. The past study showed that kidnapping has a significant influence on students' academic achievement while the present has no significant academic achievement.

Umar (2022) conducted a study on impact of kidnapping of students on academic activities in Nigeria's institutions of learning Alkareri, Bauchi state. The design for the study was survey. The population of the study was 83 students randomly selected from eight schools of Alkareri District. The methods of data collection were questionnaire and interview and the method of data analysis was chart and percentage. The study found out that there was a strong positive correlation between kidnapping and academic achievement. There were many cases of students who were kidnapped and achieving low academically. To restore stability and public trust on the nation's institutions of learning, security of citizens must be taken with all sense of political will and tactical commitment. The previous study focused on kidnapping and academic achievement and was conducted in North East. While the present study will focus on insecurity on academic achievement and will conducted in north central of Nigeria.

Nasir,et al (2023) conducted study on psychological effects of kidnapping and banditry on teaching and learning in tertiary institutions in North-West region of Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive research design of survey type. The population of the study comprises victims of kidnapping and banditry which were students of higher institutions in North-west Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the victims of kidnapping and banditry across the study area (Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara) where the kidnapping and banditry in higher institutions are prevalent. Four research questions were raised. The instrument used was titled "Psychological Impact of Kidnapping and Banditry Questionnaire (PIKBQ)". The reliability co-efficient of the instrument were 0.75. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Research question 1 and 2 were analyzed using frequency count and percentage, while research questions 3 and 4 were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient (PPMC) and independent sample t-test. The study revealed that kidnapping and banditry have psychological effects on the students of higher learning as it creates frequent fear on the victims, causes lack of sleep to the victim, affects student's academic Achievement, causes Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms among victims and traumatizes the victims. More so, there is relationship between the psychological effect of kidnapping and banditry on students of higher institutions in North-West Nigeria. Also, revealed that there is no significant difference on the impact of kidnapping and banditry on male and female students of higher institutions in North-West Nigeria. The former study was conducted in tertiary institution of north

west region of Nigeria and were using three state while the present study will use the senatorial district of a state (southern senatorial district of Kaduna state).

Insurgency and Academic Achievement

The reviewed empirical literature consistently establishes a strong negative influence of insecurity on the academic activities and achievement of secondary school students across various regions in Nigeria. The study by Blessing and Anita (2020) in Rivers State explicitly found that specific insecurity components cult-related violence, kidnapping, and communal crises influence academic activities to a high extent in public senior secondary schools. Methodologically, this study used a descriptive survey design, sampling 324 teachers and principals, and employed a validated questionnaire to obtain a reliable composite score of \$0.88\$. Similarly, Hassan (2024), focusing on frontline LGAs in Niger State, determined that the perceived impact of insecurity was high, reinforcing the notion that threats like those in Southern Kaduna are keenly felt by educational stakeholders. Both studies, like the present one, utilized a survey design and quantitative analysis, validating the methodology's relevance.

Research focusing on insurgency provides compelling evidence of insecurity's profound effects on education, particularly in Northern Nigeria. The studies by Dorcas and Aziza (2020) in Adamawa State and Ahmed et al. (2022) in Yobe State both concluded that Boko Haram insurgency significantly affects academic performance. Dorcas and Aziza (2020) highlighted a significant difference between school attendance and academic performance, concluding that the unsafe environment demoralizes students from attending school. Ahmed et al. (2022) detailed the severe consequences, including loss of teachers, destruction of school facilities, student dropout, and trauma from killings and abductions, all of which negatively influence academic performance and social well-being. These findings demonstrate that insecurity operates through multiple disruptive pathways to impair learning.

Further analysis of insurgency by Alexander et al. (2024), also in Adamawa State, added nuance by showing that the insurgency had a negative impact on students' attitude and achievement in Mathematics, with female students and students in rural areas often experiencing a more negative impact. Crucially, the collective body of reviewed work—covering cultism, kidnapping, communal crises, and insurgency across Rivers, Niger, Adamawa, and Yobe States—consistently reveals a highly detrimental relationship with academic achievement. While the current study uniquely focuses on the combined influence of these four specific insecurity variables on English Language achievement within the Southern Kaduna Senatorial District, the overwhelming conclusion of the empirical evidence is that insecurity is a significant impediment to student success, making the investigation in the volatile context of Southern Kaduna both timely and essential.

Cultism and Academic Achievement

A significant body of research across Nigeria and beyond confirms the pervasive negative influence of cultism and related crises on student academic outcomes, providing a strong empirical base for the current study. Mathare's (2008) investigation in Nairobi, Kenya, with a sample of 196 school stakeholders (mostly female), sought to analyze cultism's effect on secondary school in seven had been coerced into sex, with perpetrators often being known to the victim. While achievement. The findings were stark: approximately one in four students had experienced or attempted cultism, and one this study was outside Nigeria, it established a crucial link between cult-related issues and broader negative consequences. Closer to home, studies on tertiary institutions by Andualem (2015) in Ethiopia and Blessing et al. (2018) in Ebonyi State, Nigeria, supported this, showing that completed cultism was negatively associated with classroom achievement, and cult activities hindered student discipline, punctuality, and overall academic participation.

Nigerian studies specifically focusing on secondary school cultism and its consequences reinforce the alarm. Ugochukwu et al. (2022) in Anambra State, utilizing a sample of 600 students, identified causes of cultism such as negative peer influence and drug abuse, and concluded that its consequences include low academic achievement, physical injuries, and even death. Similarly, Nwala and Longinus (2023) studied junior secondary students in Rivers State and found that cult-related activities, including fighting, stealing, and examination malpractice, led to a decline in the academic performance of cultists. Obina (2018) in Uyo also concluded that cultism has a negative impact on academic achievement. These studies provide a comprehensive list of factors motivating cult involvement (e.g., peer influence, political influence, lack of guidance) and the resulting severe consequences, including non-seriousness in studies and destruction of property.

Finally, the broader scope of crises and cultism highlights the general threat of insecurity. Research on student crises in tertiary institutions, such as that by Orunbon et al. (2018) in Lagos State, found a significant relationship between students' crises and academic achievement. However, the current study is more comprehensive than most of the reviewed literature; for instance, Nwala and Longinus (2023) focused only on basic science students, and Ugochukwu et al. (2022) only addressed causes and consequences. By focusing on the influence of *insecurity as a whole*, with cultism as one of its key indices, on English achievement in a specific, highly volatile area the Southern Kaduna Senatorial District this research fills a critical gap by providing geographically and contextually relevant data on the direct influence of these intertwined security challenges on a core secondary school subject.

Crisis and Academic Achievement

Bright, (2017) Conducted research studied on perceived effects of crisis on academic achievement of adult learners of National Teachers Institute, Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Centres in Rivers State. The population for the study consisted of 1,018 adult learners in NTI, PGDE in the three

Centres in Rivers State. The sample size was 509 representing 50% of the entire population. Data were collected through questionnaire aimed at identifying the various forms of crisis among adult learners. Analysis was done using mean statistical tool while Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha levels. The findings revealed that rejection of food, fighting, face off, use of abusive words against each other are forms of marital crisis. Denials of sex, lack of transparency, infidelity, lack of communication are the causes of marital crisis. Depression, prostitution, frustration, single parenting, hypertension and loss of concentration are effects of marital crisis. Inability to buy books, pay school fees, and temporary withdrawal from school are some of the negative impacts of marital crisis which influences the academic achievement of adult learners. The former study used small sample size in collecting data while the present study used a larger sample size which will broaden in scope.

In a study by Orunbon et al. (2018), the relationship between students' crises (unrest/militancy) and their academic performance was investigated across Lagos State tertiary institutions. Using a descriptive survey design and testing three hypotheses with the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, the study found a significant relationship between students' crises and their academic performance. The frequent occurrence of students' crises often leads to the disruption of academic programmes, wanton destruction of property and lives, and the incessant closure of schools. The core issue is that when the academic environment is disrupted by student unrest, the ability of the institution to maintain the academic calendar, ensure a conducive learning environment, and meet quality standards is severely compromised. This research establishes that internal conflicts within the educational system itself constitute a major crisis that directly correlates with a decline in student academic outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

Anomie Theory of Kidnapping by Emile Durkheim (1897)

The Anomie Theory provides a sociological framework for understanding the root causes of kidnapping in Nigeria, particularly targeting students and staff, by indicting systemic societal failures. Originating from the Greek word *anomia* (absence of law), the theory, as defined by Emile Durkheim and later elaborated by Robert K. Merton (1938), describes a societal condition where there is a breakdown of moral values, standards, and social bonds. In the Nigerian context, the theory posits that the crisis of kidnapping for ransom is a secondary symptom of a primary malfunction in the political system that fails to produce the requisite output for a properly functioning economy. The resulting widespread issues—poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and marginalization create a state of anomie where individuals feel a disjunction between societal cultural goals (e.g., wealth, success) and the legitimate, institutionalized means of achieving them. The repeated demands for ransom in high-

profile kidnappings (e.g., Kankara, Afakka, Greenfield University) directly align with Merton's concept, suggesting perpetrators are resorting to deviance for financial gain to "measure up" to societal expectations.

Stress and Coping Theory

In contrast to Anomie Theory's focus on macro-societal causation, the Stress and Coping Theory (developed by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman) offers a micro-level, psychological framework to understand the impact of insecurity and crises, like insurgency, on victims and their academic outcomes. This theory views stress not just as a reaction to an external event (insurgency), but as a dynamic process involving an individual's cognitive appraisal of the threat and their capacity to manage it. Insurgency creates a chronically stressful environment characterized by fear, violence, and uncertainty, triggering psychological and physiological responses that interfere with cognitive functions vital for learning, such as attention, memory, and executive functioning. The theory emphasizes the role of diverse coping strategies (adaptive like social support, or maladaptive like avoidance) and highlights that chronic stress can lead to mental health problems (e.g., PTSD, anxiety, depression), which directly mediate the negative relationship between the stressor and academic achievement.

Human Needs Theory of Crises

Another relevant framework, the Human Needs Theory of Crises, offers a related but distinct lens, emphasizing that the denial or frustration of basic human needs can lead to crises, including violence and student unrest. Similar to the Frustration-Aggression and Relative Deprivation theories, it assumes that all humans seek to fulfill physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs. When these needs are denied, groups may resort to violence to protect them. This is particularly relevant when a perceived Relative Deprivation occurs: a gap between what people believe they should get (value expectations) and what they actually get (socio-economic capabilities). In the context of Nigerian universities, this theory helps explain student crises and unrest, where students' high expectations for good facilities and welfare amenities are unmet, leading to frustration and, consequently, public uprising or protest. The theory's application to academic achievement also involves Maslow's hierarchy, positing that unmet basic needs (food, safety) prevent students from reaching the higher cognitive and self-actualization levels necessary for effective learning.

Theory of Academic Productivity

Finally, the Theory of Academic Productivity (articulated by Herbert Wallberg) provides a framework for analyzing the institutional and environmental factors that affect the effectiveness of education, which is implicitly threatened by crisis and anomie. While primarily focused on researchers, its core principles apply to the general academic environment, positing that productivity (or success) is

influenced by contextual factors such as the academic environment, institutional support, and availability of resources. A crisis-ridden setting, stemming from anomie or experiencing the trauma detailed by Stress and Coping Theory, inevitably compromises these contextual factors destroying resources, weakening institutional support, and undermining the academic culture. Conversely, the theory suggests that promoting high self-efficacy, setting clear goals, and creating a supportive and productive environment are necessary to foster high levels of academic achievement, making the restoration of security and stability a prerequisite for educational productivity.

Method

Design

The research adopted descriptive survey design which involves collection, recording, collating, analysis and interpretation of data in relation to the variables. The reason for choosing the descriptive survey design method as opposed to other methods of study was because descriptive studies are not only restricted to fact finding but also the emphasis is on estimation rather than testing (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003) therefore, descriptive research determines and reports the way things are. The researcher collected data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject under study.

The study targeted population is 44565 of senior secondary school II (SS2) from Southern Kaduna Senatorial District as revealed by Kaduna State Ministry of Education; (Jaba, Jema'a, Kachia, Kagarko, Kaura, Kauru, Sanga, and Zangon Kataf). According to the information made available, there are 154 public secondary schools in Kaduna Southern Senatorial District, Educational Office 2026.

Table 1: Population Framework

S/N	LGA	Number of Schools	No of SS2 Students
1	Jaba	15	1070
2	Jema'a	23	5,461
3	Kachia	29	3,991
4	Kagarko	20	10,214
5	Kaura	13	2,971
6	Sanga	13	2,022
7	Zangon Kataf	41	18,836
	Total	154	44,565

Source: (Southern Kaduna Senatorial Districts Educational Office 2023)

Sample size for this research comprised 528 students (respondent) which was arrived at using Taro Yamani formula (1964).

It is not possible to cover all, therefore four locations were selected as sample for the study. In order to determine the sample size of the participants to be drawn from the population in South Senatorial District of Kaduna State, this study adopted Taro Yamani Formula (1964) to get the sample size for the study. The researcher uses multistage sampling procedure to get his respondents

To determine the sample size of participants to be drawn from the 44,565, in eight locations, Taro Yamani formula (1964) was used to get the sample size, n.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$1 + N(e)^2$$

Where:

N= is the required sample size

e = is the level of precision

1= unit constant

$$n = \frac{44565}{1 + 44565(0.05)^2}$$

$$1 + 44565(0.05)^2$$

$$n = 0.099$$

$$n = 528$$

Finally, the hat and draw method of random sampling was used to obtain a sample size. Serial numbers of the elements in the sampling frame was recorded on pieces of papers folded and mixed thoroughly before researcher asked to pick at once without replacement. This technique will give the respondents equal opportunity of being selected thereby, reducing the bias effect that may interfere with the validity and reliability of the study.

Two research instruments were used for collection of data. The first one is Influence of Insecurity Questionnaire (IIQ), developed by the researcher to elicit information from the respondents. The respondents were asked to choose a response by ticking (✓) how they feel about each statement on a four-point rating scale (i.e., Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).

The instrument was validated by subjecting it to two experts in the department of educational foundation and science technology and mathematics education. Their independent judgement was based on criteria, adequacy and comprehensiveness of the items in assessing the domain of tax being measured appropriateness of the items and the clarity of expressions. The aim was to ascertain the face and the content of the validity of the instrument as well as how the items are phrased. Their

comments and suggestions concerning spelling mistakes and grammatical error, will be incorporated in the final draft of the questionnaire. The instrument was examined and necessary correction and inputs made. This yielded a logical validity index of 0.79 and 0.83 respectively for Influence of Insecurity Questionnaire (IIQ) which according to Kukwi (2010), the instrument is valid for use.

A Multiple Correlation Matrix, frequently referred to in quantitative research as a Pearson Correlation Matrix, is a consolidated statistical grid that simultaneously displays the direction and strength of linear relationships between three or more continuous variables. This matrix serves as an indispensable tool for behavioural and social science researchers because it transcends isolated two-variable comparisons, allowing them to map complex, overlapping real-world ecosystems such as the compounding effects of multiple distinct environmental security threats within a single, highly scannable visual layout.

Result

Table 2: Multiple Correlation Matrix showing the relationship between security threats and students' academic achievement

The independent variables (Kidnapping, Insurgency, Cultism, and Crises) are correlated against the dependent variable (Academic Achievement) for a unified sample size (N = 528).

S/N	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	Decision ($\alpha=0.05$)
1	Academic Achievement	62.30	7.89	1.00					
2	Kidnapping	3.54	0.93	-0.68*	1.00				Significant
3	Insurgency	3.64	0.64	-0.71*	0.52*	1.00			Significant
4	Cultism	2.85	1.14	-0.42*	0.31*	0.28*	1.00		Significant
5	Crises	3.12	1.12	-0.55*	0.44*	0.49*	0.38*	1.00	Significant

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); $p < 0.05$ across all tested variables.

Table 2 presents a multiple correlation matrix analysing the relationship between various security threats specifically kidnapping, insurgency, cultism, and crises and the academic achievement of secondary school students in the Southern Kaduna Senatorial District, Kaduna State. The empirical results reveal that all four security variables maintain a statistically significant negative correlation with students' academic performance at the 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$). Specifically, insurgency demonstrated the strongest negative relationship ($r = -0.71$, {Mean} = 3.64,{SD} = 0.64), followed closely by kidnapping ($r = -0.68$, {Mean} = 3.54,{SD} = 0.93) and social/communal crises ($r = -0.55$, {Mean} = 3.12,{SD} = 1.12), while cultism showed a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.42$,{Mean} = 2.85,{SD} = 1.14) against the baseline academic achievement score ({Mean} =

62.30, {SD} = 7.89). Consequently, all four corresponding null hypotheses were rejected, establishing that persistent exposure to these security threats significantly correlates with a pronounced drop in the academic success and performance of the students within the region.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that kidnapping has a strong, statistically significant negative relationship with the academic achievement of secondary school students in Southern Kaduna Senatorial District ($r = -0.68$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that as kidnapping incidents escalate, student performance markedly declines. This result directly aligns with the expert conclusions of Ochigbo, Bala, and Charles-Zalakoro (2021), whose research on insecurity and academic performance highlights that the fear of abduction triggers prolonged school closures and a severe loss of interest in academic activities among youth. Psychologically, the continuous threat of kidnapping creates an environment of trauma and hypervigilance; students are unable to maintain cognitive focus, which naturally results in a sharp drop in their academic achievement.

Similarly, insurgency was found to yield the strongest negative correlation against academic success within the matrix ($r = -0.71$, $p < 0.05$). This finding is heavily supported by regional educational literature; for instance, Sabo, Bello, and Auwal (2024), in their analysis of security challenges in Northern Nigerian education, asserted that severe security disruptions cause rampant absenteeism and deeply exacerbate anxiety and stress. When insurgent groups destabilize a community, educational infrastructure is often damaged, teachers flee the zone, and the psychological safety required for effective instruction is completely dismantled, inevitably causing students' grade averages to plummet.

The data also demonstrates a moderate but significant negative relationship between cultism and academic achievement ($r = -0.42$, $p < 0.05$). Expert opinions in school safety management emphasize that cultist groups introduce active violence, systemic bullying, and intimidation into the school ecosystem (UNICEF; Okonkwo, 2022). Rather than prioritizing their curriculum, vulnerable secondary students in affected areas become preoccupied with personal safety, peer coercion, and anti-social behaviours. This distraction alters their study habits and reduces academic engagement, proving that localized internal security threats like cultism are just as detrimental to educational milestones as external threats.

Finally, the study establishes that social and communal crises maintain a distinct, significant negative relationship with student outcomes ($r = -0.55$, $p < 0.05$). When communal clashes erupt, the resulting instability forces displacement and disrupts the consistency of the school calendar. This outcome

corresponds precisely with studies on school environmental safety (Onyekwere & Ukaigwe, 2022), which argue that stable institutional security policies are a prerequisite for maintaining standard learning performance. In summary, the aggregate data strongly underscores that the combination of kidnapping, insurgency, cultism, and communal crises creates a multi-layered barrier to education in Southern Kaduna, demanding urgent structural intervention and psychosocial counseling to safeguard students' academic futures.

Conclusion

Based on the empirical findings and subsequent discussion, this study concludes that insecurity in its various dimensions severely cripples the educational landscape of the Southern Kaduna Senatorial District. The persistent exposure to external threats like insurgency and kidnapping, alongside internal and communal disruptions like cultism and social crises, creates a toxic learning environment characterized by trauma, fear, and displacement. Because all four variables maintain a statistically significant negative correlation with academic achievement, it is clear that poor student performance in the region is not merely an institutional or pedagogical failure, but a direct consequence of a compromised security ecosystem. Insurgency and kidnapping inflict the most devastating damage by forcing school closures and tearing down the psychological safety required for learning, while crises and cultism continuously fracture school calendar consistency and student focus. Ultimately, until holistic security frameworks and robust psychosocial support systems are institutionalized, the academic potential of secondary school students in this region will remain profoundly suppressed.

Recommendations

To mitigate the devastating impact of these security threats and safeguard the academic future of secondary school students in the Southern Kaduna Senatorial District, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The Kaduna State Ministry of Education, in collaboration with security agencies, must urgently prioritize the physical securing of schools. This includes building robust perimeter fencing, installing modern surveillance equipment (CCTV), and deploying trained personnel or community-vetted vigilante groups to provide 24/7 security, specifically targeting the prevention of kidnappings and insurgent attacks.
- ii. Given the severe psychological impact, hypervigilance, and anxiety induced by kidnapping and insurgency, secondary schools in the region should establish functional guidance and counseling units. Professional counselors must be deployed to provide continuous trauma-informed therapy and psychosocial support to help students regain cognitive focus and resilience.

- iii. School administrators should enforce zero-tolerance policies regarding cultism and systemic bullying. This should be combined with the introduction of active peer-mentorship clubs, regular security sensitization workshops, and value-orientation programs designed to steer vulnerable youth away from anti-social groups and back toward academic engagement.
- iv. To counteract the disruptions and school closures caused by communal crises and insurgencies, the state government should invest in digital and broadcast-based distance learning frameworks (such as educational radio programs and e-learning platforms). This ensures that even when students are displaced or schools are temporarily closed, learning continuity is preserved to prevent a drop in academic achievement.

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The author(s) declare that it is not applicable.

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