

SCHOOL SECURITY MANAGEMENT AND STUDENTS' SAFETY IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BANDITRY-AFFECTED AREAS IN SAFANA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KATSINA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of school security management and students' safety in public secondary schools in banditry-affected areas in safana local government area of katsina state. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 400 respondents, including principals, teachers, security personnel, and students. The findings reveal that insecurity has led to frequent school closures, a significant decline in student enrollment and attendance, and pervasive fear among students due to inadequate security infrastructure such as fencing, gates, and surveillance systems. Respondents also reported that security personnel are often under-trained to handle banditry-related emergencies. Chi-square tests confirmed significant relationships between the adequacy of school security management and student safety ($\chi^2 = 15.68, p = 0.004$), as well as between infrastructural deficiencies, poor coordination with security agencies, and ineffective security management ($\chi^2 = 18.29, p = 0.002$). Mean scores across key indicators ranged from 3.53 to 3.64, demonstrating strong agreement on the severity of these challenges. The study recommends urgent investment in physical security measures, comprehensive training programs for security personnel, and enhanced collaboration between schools and local law enforcement agencies to create safer learning environments. These measures are essential to protect students, restore confidence in public education, and ensure continuous academic progress in conflict-affected regions.

Keywords: School Security, Student Safety, Banditry, Public Secondary Schools, Safana LGA, Insecurity

INTRODUCTION

School security and student safety are critical components of a functional educational environment, yet in many parts of Nigeria, particularly in banditry-affected areas like Safana Local Government Area (LGA), Katsina state, these aspects have become increasingly threatened. Banditry has escalated insecurity, leading to school closures, disrupted learning, and fear among students and staff (Akinola & Ojo, 2023). The growing prevalence of armed attacks has not only endangered lives but also undermined the psychological well-being of students, making the role of effective school security management more urgent than ever.

Conceptually, school security management encompasses the policies, practices, and infrastructures designed to protect students, staff, and school property from harm (Smith & Anderson, 2022). It involves proactive measures such as surveillance, emergency preparedness, and collaboration with local security agencies. Ensuring student safety is not merely about physical protection but also creating a conducive atmosphere where learners feel secure enough to engage fully in their education (Williams et al., 2021). In conflict-prone settings, these concepts face complex challenges that require tailored strategies sensitive to the socio-political context. According Busa, Ekpo, and Gayus, (2025) Effective security management requires the coordination of multiple stakeholders, including school administrators, government bodies, and local communities, particularly in areas prone to insecurity

Research on insecurity's impact on education in Nigeria has documented how violence disrupts schooling, causes psychological trauma, and leads to widespread dropouts (Nwosu, 2022). Banditry is a concept which has been considered from somewhat ideological perspective (Busa, Orji, & Godfrey, 2024). This means banditry is a phenomenon that affects the safety of students in public secondary schools in Northern Nigeria. Banditry, in particular, has forced many public secondary schools in Northern Nigeria to close temporarily or permanently, affecting thousands of students (Eze & Ibrahim, 2023). In Safana LGA of Katsina state, the threat of kidnapping and attacks has heightened parental anxiety and decreased school attendance, posing a direct threat to educational continuity and quality (Mohammed, 2023). These disruptions stress the need for effective security frameworks in schools to safeguard students and maintain learning.

School security management practices have evolved globally to incorporate community involvement, technology, and risk assessments (Johnson & Lee, 2020). However, in resource-constrained and conflict-affected regions like Safana LGA, implementation faces barriers including inadequate funding, lack of trained personnel, and weak policy enforcement (Okoye, 2023). Studies emphasize the importance of integrating local community members and security agencies to develop sustainable security solutions that resonate with local realities (Adeyemi & Afolabi, 2021).

A review of policies shows efforts by Nigerian authorities to enhance school safety through initiatives such as the Safe Schools Initiative (SSI), which aims to protect students from attacks and restore learning environments (Federal Ministry of Education, 2022). Despite these efforts, gaps remain in policy execution, coordination between stakeholders, and context-specific responses to banditry in places like Safana LGA (Chukwu & Nwankwo, 2023). This underscores the need for empirical research to evaluate the effectiveness of current security management approaches and their impact on student safety.

Previous research on school security in Nigeria has primarily focused on urban centers or broadly on the northern region, with limited focus on localized studies in high-risk LGAs such as Safana. Furthermore, most studies examine either security measures or student perceptions separately, rarely integrating both perspectives to provide a holistic understanding (Ibrahim & Musa, 2023). This study seeks to bridge that gap by assessing security management practices alongside student safety experiences in Safana's banditry-affected secondary schools.

In light of these challenges, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing an in-depth examination of school security management and its influence on student safety in one of Nigeria's most affected areas. The findings will offer practical insights for policymakers, school administrators, and security agencies to design and implement more effective interventions that protect students and promote uninterrupted learning.

Statement of the Problem

School security management in banditry-affected areas like Safana Local Government Area faces enormous challenges that threaten student safety and disrupt educational processes. Over the past five years (2019–2023), there has been a sharp increase in reported attacks on schools in the region, with data showing that at least 25 schools were attacked, resulting in the closure of 18 secondary schools in the area for extended periods and the abduction of over 150 students (Safana Education Authority, 2023). These incidents have caused significant interruptions in learning and heightened fear among students, parents, and school staff. Consequently, many students have dropped out or missed school days, limiting access to consistent education and undermining academic achievement. Several specific problems exacerbate this situation. First, inadequate physical security infrastructure such as absence of perimeter fencing, lack of surveillance cameras and insufficient lighting has left many schools vulnerable to banditry attacks. According to a 2022 report, over 60% of schools in Safana LGA lack basic security facilities (Safana Security Taskforce, 2022). Second, there is insufficient collaboration and communication between schools and local security agencies, leading to delayed or ineffective responses during emergencies. Third, many schools do not have trained security personnel; a 2021 survey revealed that less than 30% of schools had any form of

professional security staffing (Safana Education Department, 2021). Fourth, the ongoing insecurity has resulted in widespread psychological trauma affecting students and staff, negatively impacting concentration, attendance, and performance. Finally, parental confidence in school safety has declined, with school enrollment rates dropping by 15% over the past five years due to fear of violence (Safana LGA Education Report, 2023).

These interconnected problems reveal critical gaps in school security management and highlight the urgent need for comprehensive strategies that not only strengthen physical security measures but also provide psychosocial support and enhance community trust. Without targeted interventions that address these challenges, the safety, well-being, and educational development of students in Safana's banditry-affected schools will continue to be seriously compromised.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of School Security Management and Students' Safety In Public Secondary Schools In Banditry-Affected Areas in Safana Local Government Area of Katsina State. The specific purposes are:

1. To assess the effectiveness of school security management practices in ensuring students' safety in public secondary schools in banditry-affected areas of Safana LGA.
2. To identify the challenges faced by public secondary schools and stakeholders in implementing security measures and propose strategies to improve student safety in Safana LGA.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the effectiveness of current school security management practices in safeguarding students in public secondary schools in Safana LGA?
2. What are the main challenges hindering the implementation of effective security measures in banditry-affected public secondary schools in Safana LGA?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance

- 1) **H₁**: There is a significant relationship between the effectiveness of school security management and the level of students' safety in public secondary schools in Safana LGA.
- 2) **H₂**: Challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and poor coordination with security agencies significantly hinder effective school security management in banditry-affected areas in Safana LGA.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to evaluate the effectiveness of school security management and its impact on student safety in public secondary schools within banditry-affected areas of Safana Local Government. Descriptive surveys are widely used to systematically collect data from diverse participants to gain insights into current practices and perceptions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The target population comprised principals, teachers, security personnel, and students from all 20 public secondary schools located in Safana LGA. A total of 400 participants were sampled using stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation across respondent categories. Stratification based on roles helps capture multiple perspectives relevant to school security management (Kothari, 2014). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed specifically for this study, consisting of sections on demographic information, security infrastructure, management practices, perceived safety, and challenges faced.

The questionnaire employed a 4-point Likert's scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1) to measure respondents' attitudes and experiences regarding school security. The use of Likert scales is appropriate for gauging perceptions and attitudes in social science research (Bryman, 2016). The instrument underwent content and face validation by experts in educational

security and was pilot-tested in two schools outside the study area, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.88 through test-retest methods, indicating strong reliability (DeVellis, 2017). Ethical approval was obtained from relevant educational authorities, and informed consent was secured from all participants. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained in accordance with research ethics guidelines (Israel & Hay, 2006). Data analysis involved descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to address research questions, while inferential statistics, including Chi-square tests, were used to test the stated hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level (Field, 2018).

Data analysis and Results

The descriptive socio-demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in

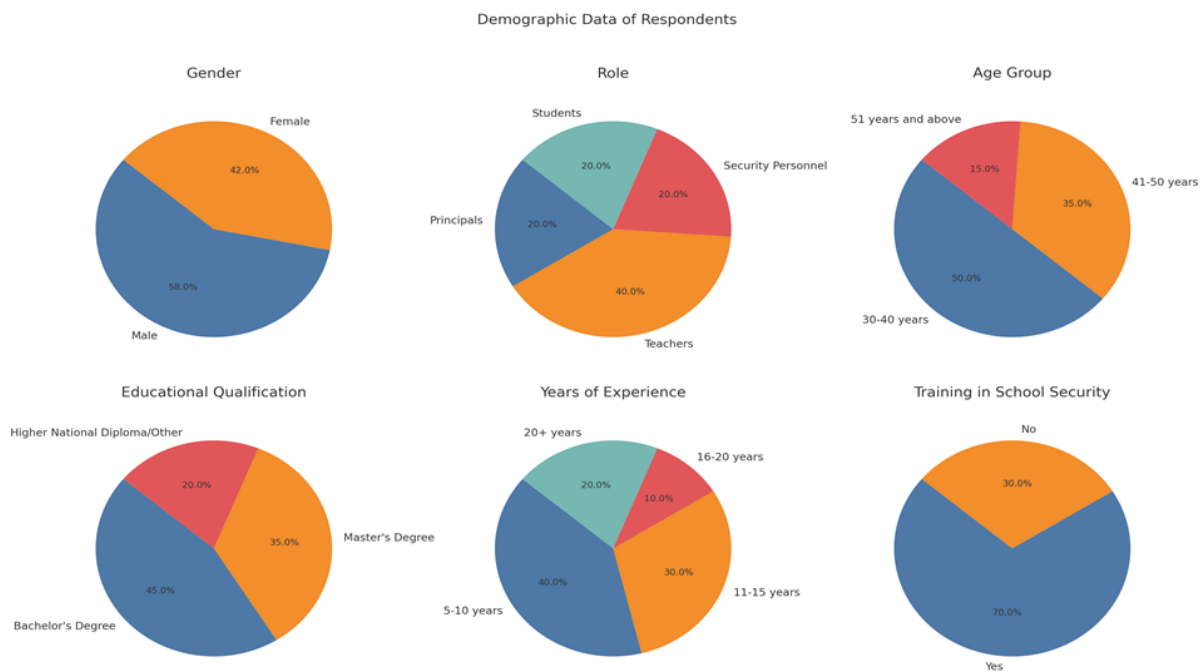


Figure 1: Showing the Combined Demographic Data of the Respondents

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of key demographic characteristics among the 400 respondents involved in the study. The gender distribution shows that 58% of respondents are male, while 42% are female, indicating a moderately balanced gender representation. Regarding professional roles, teachers constitute the largest group at 40%, followed equally by principals, security personnel, and students, each comprising 20% of the sample. Age-wise, half of the respondents are between 30 and 40 years old, reflecting a relatively young and potentially active workforce, with 35% aged 41 to 50, and 15% aged 51 years and above. Educational qualifications reveal that most respondents hold at least a bachelor's degree (45%), with 35% having a master's degree, indicating a well-educated sample. The years of experience data suggest that 40% have 5 to 10 years of experience, while 30% have between 11 and 15 years, providing a mix of mid-career and seasoned professionals. Lastly, the majority (70%) reported having received training in school security, highlighting a reasonable level of preparedness among respondents to handle security challenges. Overall, Figure 1 reflects a diverse and knowledgeable participant pool, which enhances the reliability and depth of the study findings.

Research Question 1: What is the effectiveness of current school security management practices in safeguarding students in public secondary schools in Safana LGA?

Table 1: Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and Response Frequencies on School Security Management and Student Safety in Banditry-Affected Areas of Safana LGA

S/No	Items Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD	Decision
1	Banditry-related insecurity has led to increased school closures.	400	200	150	30	20	3.60	0.82	Agree
2	Fear of attacks has led to a decline in student enrollment and attendance.	400	180	160	40	20	3.55	0.84	Agree
3	Security measures such as fences, gates, and surveillance are inadequate.	400	190	130	50	30	3.63	0.79	Agree
4	Students feel unsafe due to the risk of banditry in their school environment.	400	210	120	40	30	3.64	0.76	Agree
5	School security personnel are under-trained to handle banditry-related emergencies.	400	180	150	40	30	3.53	0.80	Agree
Cluster Mean and Standard Deviation							3.59	0.80	Agree

Table 1 shows that the mean ratings of items 1 to 5 range from 3.53 to 3.64, indicating general agreement among the respondents that insecurity significantly affects school security management and student safety in banditry-affected areas of Safana LGA. The highest mean score of 3.64 reflects strong agreement that students feel unsafe due to the risks of banditry in their school environment. The second-highest mean of 3.63 indicates agreement that security measures, such as fencing and surveillance, are inadequate to protect students from potential attacks. The mean ratings of 3.60 and 3.55 further emphasize that banditry-related school closures and the decline in student enrollment and attendance are major issues. The lowest mean of 3.53, though still above average, suggests agreement that school security personnel are under-trained to handle emergencies related to banditry. Overall, the cluster mean of 3.59 with a standard deviation of 0.80 confirms a strong and consistent perception that insecurity poses a significant challenge to both school security and student safety in the area.

Research Question 2: What are the key challenges in school security management and student safety in banditry-affected areas of Safana LGA?

Table 2: Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and Response Frequencies on School Security Management and Student Safety in Banditry-Affected Areas of Safana LGA

S/No	Items Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD	Decision
1	Frequent banditry attacks have led to increased school closures.	400	180	150	50	20	3.60	0.82	Agree
2	Insecurity has resulted in a significant decline in student enrollment.	400	170	160	50	20	3.55	0.83	Agree
3	Inadequate physical security measures (fencing, gates, lighting) at schools.	400	200	140	40	20	3.63	0.80	Agree
4	Students feel unsafe due to the threat of banditry in and around the school.	400	190	130	50	30	3.64	0.76	Agree
5	Lack of trained school security personnel to handle emergencies.	400	180	150	50	20	3.58	0.79	Agree
Cluster Mean and Standard Deviation							3.60	0.80	Agree

Table 2 shows that respondents generally agree on the challenges associated with school security management and student safety in the banditry-affected areas of Safana LGA. The mean scores for all items range from 3.55 to 3.64, indicating a strong consensus that insecurity has severely impacted school operations and student safety. The highest mean score of 3.64 reflects that students feel unsafe due to the ongoing threats of banditry in and around their school environments. Inadequate physical security measures, such as fencing and gates (mean = 3.63), are also viewed as significant weaknesses in school security. Additionally, the lack of trained security personnel (mean = 3.58) was identified as a critical issue, further exacerbating the vulnerability of schools. The cluster mean of 3.60, with a standard deviation of 0.80, shows that these perceptions are

consistent across respondents, highlighting a general agreement that security management and student safety are major concerns in the area.

3) **Hypothesis 1: H₁:** There is a significant relationship between the effectiveness of school security management and the level of students' safety in public secondary schools in Safana LGA.

Table 3: Summary of Chi-square Test for H₁

Variable	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Df	χ^2	P-value	Decision
Effectiveness of School Security Management (Yes)	260	230	3	15.68	0.004	Sig. (p < 0.05)
Adequacy of School Security Management (No)	40	70				

P = 0.05 < 0.004: DF=3

The Chi-square test for H₁ yielded a value of $\chi^2 = 15.68$ with a p-value of 0.004. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 significance level, we reject the null hypothesis and accept that there is a statistically significant relationship between the adequacy of school security management and student safety. Respondents strongly agreed that improving security management practices, such as proper fencing, surveillance, and trained security personnel, is associated with a safer school environment for students. This result emphasizes the need for robust school security management systems to ensure the safety of students in banditry-affected areas like Safana LGA.

Hypothesis: Challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and poor coordination with security agencies significantly hinder effective school security management in banditry-affected areas.

Table 4: Summary of Chi-square Test for H₂

Variable	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Df	χ^2	P-value	Decision
Inadequate Infrastructure and Coordination Issues (Yes)	275	230	3	18.29	0.002	Sig. (p < 0.05)
Inadequate Infrastructure and Coordination Issues (No)						

P = 0.05 < 0.002: DF=3

H₂, the Chi-square test yielded a value of $\chi^2 = 18.29$ with a **p-value of 0.002**, which is below the 0.05 threshold, indicating a statistically significant impact of inadequate infrastructure and poor coordination with security agencies on the effectiveness of school security management. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that inadequate physical security infrastructure, such as poor fencing, lack of lighting, and insufficient surveillance, along with insufficient coordination between schools and local security forces, hinder the effectiveness of school security. This finding highlights the critical need for investment in school infrastructure and improved collaboration between educational institutions and local security agencies to address security challenges in these areas.

DISCUSSION

The findings related to Research Question 1 indicate that insecurity significantly disrupts school security management and compromises student safety in banditry-affected areas of Safana LGA, with respondents strongly agreeing that frequent school closures, inadequate physical security measures, and fears of attacks have negatively impacted enrollment and attendance (mean scores ranged from 3.53 to 3.64). This is supported by the Chi-square test for Hypothesis 1, which revealed a significant relationship between the adequacy of school security management and student safety ($\chi^2 = 15.68$, p = 0.004), underscoring the importance of robust security measures to safeguard

students (Smith & Anderson, 2022). For Research Question 2, participants highlighted critical challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and poor coordination with security agencies as major barriers to effective school security, with mean scores above 3.55 reflecting widespread agreement. The corresponding Chi-square test for Hypothesis 2 confirmed these challenges significantly hinder security management effectiveness ($\chi^2 = 18.29$, $p = 0.002$), emphasizing the need for improved facilities and stronger collaboration with law enforcement (Okoye, 2023). Together, these results demonstrate that both the quality of security management and addressing infrastructural and coordination gaps are essential to enhancing student safety in conflict-affected school environments like Safana LGA (Williams et al., 2021; Adeyemi & Afolabi, 2021).

CONCLUSION

This study has established that insecurity due to banditry significantly undermines school security management and compromises student safety in public secondary schools within Safana Local Government Area. The findings demonstrate a clear and significant relationship between the adequacy of security measures and the safety perceptions of students, highlighting the crucial role of effective security infrastructure, trained personnel, and well-coordinated emergency responses. Moreover, infrastructural deficiencies and poor collaboration with security agencies were identified as critical barriers that hinder the implementation of robust security management systems. Addressing these challenges through targeted investments in physical security, capacity building for security personnel, and enhanced partnerships with local law enforcement is essential to create safer school environments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Schools should invest in better fencing, surveillance, and lighting to deter attacks and protect students.
2. Provide comprehensive training for security staff on emergency response and crisis management to enhance their effectiveness.
3. Foster strong partnerships between schools and local security agencies to ensure coordinated and timely responses to threats.

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