BANDITRY AND KIDNAPPING AS PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

This study examined banditry and kidnapping as predictors of secondary school students' academic achievement in Katsina State, Nigeria. A correlational research design was adopted. The population comprised 28,456 students, from whom a sample of 384 was selected using multistage sampling. Data were collected with a researcher-developed questionnaire, the Banditry, Kidnapping and Academic Achievement Questionnaire (BKAAQ). Experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation validated the instrument, which had a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.84. Data were analysed using means, standard deviations and multiple regression at the 0.05 significance level. Banditry significantly and negatively predicted students' academic achievement ($\beta = -0.487$, $t = -10.346$, $p < .05$), as did kidnapping ($\beta = -0.431$, $t = -8.892$, $p < .05$). Together, the two predictors were significantly associated with academic achievement, $R = .592$, $R^2 = .350$, $F(2, 381) = 102.58$, $p < .05$. The study concluded that banditry and kidnapping were associated with lower academic achievement, potentially through disruption to teaching and learning, absenteeism, psychological distress and reduced access to educational opportunities. It recommends strengthening school security, implementing safe-school initiatives and providing psychosocial support for affected students.

Keywords: Banditry, Kidnapping, Academic Achievement, Secondary School Students, Insecurity, Katsina State.

Introduction

Introduction

Education is an important driver of national development and social change. It enables societies to pass knowledge, values, skills and cultural heritage on to younger generations. Achievement at the secondary-school level can shape students' future educational and occupational opportunities. Factors that disrupt teaching and learning can therefore pose serious challenges for students and for educational development.

Academic achievement refers to the extent to which students attain educational goals and learning outcomes, as measured through examinations, tests and continuous assessment. Aremu and Sokan (2023) describe it as students' performance in school subjects and an indicator of the effectiveness of teaching and learning. High achievement may reflect successful learning, while low achievement may reflect environmental, psychological, social, or institutional barriers.

In recent years, insecurity has become a major concern for education in Nigeria. Banditry and kidnapping are particularly prevalent in the north-west, including Katsina State. Banditry involves organised criminal activities such as armed robbery, cattle rustling, attacks on communities, destruction of property and violent assaults. Kidnapping involves the unlawful abduction and detention of people, often for ransom or other criminal purposes. These forms of violence have affected schools, students, teachers and education administrators. UNICEF (2024) reports that insecurity has contributed to school closures, increased dropout rates and reduced access to education in conflict-affected areas of Nigeria. In Katsina State, attacks on communities have reportedly caused deaths, displacement and disruption to socioeconomic activities. The resulting fear can discourage school attendance and undermine the conditions needed for learning.

Banditry may affect students' academic achievement through several pathways. Attacks can lead to school closures and lost instructional time, while damage to facilities can limit access to suitable learning environments. Insecurity may also cause fear and anxiety among students and teachers, affecting concentration and motivation. When families are displaced, students' education may be interrupted. Kidnapping can similarly discourage attendance, as students and parents may fear abduction. Students who experience kidnapping directly or indirectly may also face psychological distress that makes learning more difficult.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory offers one explanation for how insecurity may be related to academic achievement. Maslow (1954) proposed that people need to feel safe before they can fully pursue higher-order goals such as learning and self-actualisation. Students who feel unsafe may

struggle to concentrate on academic activities. Studies by Ahmed and Ibrahim (2023), Yusuf and Abdullahi (2024), and Bello et al. (2025) have reported negative relationships between insecurity and students' academic achievement in northern Nigeria. However, limited research has examined the predictive relationship of banditry and kidnapping with academic achievement specifically in Katsina State. This study addresses that gap.

Statement of the Problem

The prevalence of banditry and kidnapping in Katsina State has raised concerns about their effects on education. Reports of attacks on communities, student abductions, damage to school facilities, and family displacement have heightened concern among education stakeholders. Students in affected areas may experience fear and uncertainty, while attacks can contribute to school closures, irregular attendance, disrupted teaching and psychological distress. Kidnapping can also increase anxiety among parents and students, potentially reducing attendance and participation in learning.

Although previous studies have examined insecurity and education in Nigeria, empirical evidence remains limited on the specific predictive relationship between banditry, kidnapping and students' academic achievement in Katsina State. As a result, the extent to which these security challenges are associated with students' achievement in the state is unclear. This study therefore examines banditry and kidnapping as predictors of academic achievement among secondary-school students in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to:

1. Examine the influence of banditry on secondary school students' academic achievement in Katsina State.
2. Determine the influence of kidnapping on secondary school students' academic achievement in Katsina State.
3. Determine the joint influence of banditry and kidnapping on students' academic achievement among secondary school students in Katsina State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Does banditry significantly predict academic achievement among secondary school students in Katsina State?
2. Does kidnapping predict academic achievement among secondary school students in Katsina State?
3. Do banditry and kidnapping jointly predict academic achievement among secondary school students in Katsina State?

Research Hypotheses

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

H01: Banditry has no significant influence on secondary school students' academic achievement in Katsina State.

H02: Kidnapping has no significant influence on students' academic achievement among secondary school students in Katsina State.

H03: Banditry and kidnapping do not jointly have a significant influence on students' academic achievement among secondary school students in Katsina State.

Methodology

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design to examine relationships among variables without manipulating them. The population comprised 28,456 students enrolled in public secondary schools across Katsina State, Nigeria. A sample of 384 students was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan sample-size table. Participants were selected through a multistage procedure involving stratified, purposive and simple random sampling.

Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled the *Banditry, Kidnapping and Perceived Academic Achievement Questionnaire* (BKPAAQ). It comprised four sections: demographic information, a banditry scale, a kidnapping scale and a perceived academic achievement scale. Responses were rated on a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). Three experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Psychology reviewed the instrument for face and content validity. A pilot study involving 40 students outside the study area yielded an overall Cronbach's alpha

coefficient of 0.84 for the banditry, kidnapping and perceived academic achievement scales, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher with assistance from trained research assistants. The researchers arranged access to participants through the relevant gatekeeper, and approximately 96% of the questionnaires were retrieved. Means and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions, while multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level.

Results

Research Question One

To what extent does banditry influence students' academic achievement among secondary school students in Katsina State?

Hypothesis One

H01: Banditry has no significant influence on secondary school students' academic achievement in Katsina State.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Banditry, Kidnapping and Students' Academic Achievement

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Banditry	384	1.25	4.00	2.71	0.80
Kidnapping	384	1.00	4.00	2.58	0.80
Academic Achievement	384	1.40	4.00	2.96	0.80

Table 1 shows that the mean score for reported exposure to banditry was 2.71 (SD = 0.80), while the mean score for kidnapping was 2.58 (SD = 0.80). Students' perceived academic achievement had a mean of 2.96 (SD = 0.80). Based on the study's interpretation of the scale, these scores indicate moderate reported exposure to banditry and kidnapping and a moderate level of perceived academic achievement.

Research Question One: To what extent does banditry influence students' academic achievement among secondary school students in Katsina State?

Table 2: Simple Regression Model Summary for Banditry as a Predictor of Students' Academic Achievement

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estm.	Durbin-Watson
1	0.487	0.237	0.235	0.875	1.94

Table 2 shows a model *R* of .487 and an R^2 of .237, indicating that banditry accounted for 23.7% of the variance in students' perceived academic achievement in the model. The adjusted R^2 was .235. The Durbin–Watson statistic was 1.94, close to 2, suggesting no substantial residual autocorrelation.

Table 3: ANOVA for the Simple Regression of Banditry on Students' Academic Achievement

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	90.77	1	90.77	118.66	< .001
Residual	292.23	382	0.765		
Total	383.00	383			

Table 3 shows that the regression model for banditry significantly predicted students' perceived academic achievement, $F(1, 382) = 118.66$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis that banditry does not significantly predict students' perceived academic achievement was rejected. This result indicates a statistically significant predictive relationship; it does not establish causation.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients for Banditry Predicting Students' Academic Achievement

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Constant	4.279	0.126	-	33.89	< .001	4.031	4.527
Banditry	−0.487	0.045	−0.487	−10.89	< .001	−0.575	−0.399

Table 4 shows that banditry made a statistically significant negative contribution to students' perceived academic achievement ($B = -0.487$, $\beta = -0.487$, $t = -10.89$, $p < .001$). Higher reported banditry was associated with lower perceived achievement. The 95% confidence interval for the unstandardized coefficient ranged from −0.575 to −0.399 and did not include zero. Since $p < .001$, the null hypothesis that banditry does not significantly predict students' academic achievement

was rejected. The results indicate that banditry significantly and negatively predicted students' perceived academic achievement in Katsina State.

Research Question Two: To what extent does kidnapping influence students' academic achievement among secondary school students in Katsina State?

Table 5: Simple Regression Model Summary for Kidnapping as a Predictor of Students' Academic Achievement

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estm	Durbin-Watson
1	0.431	0.186	0.184	0.903	1.97

Table 5 shows a model R of .431 and an R^2 of .186, indicating that kidnapping accounted for 18.6% of the variance in students' perceived academic achievement. The adjusted R^2 was .184. The Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.97, close to 2, suggesting no substantial residual autocorrelation.

Table 6: ANOVA for the Simple Regression of Kidnapping on Students' Academic Achievement

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	71.24	1	71.24	87.29	< .001
Residual	311.76	382	0.816		
Total	383.00	383			

Table 6 shows that the regression model for kidnapping significantly predicted students' perceived academic achievement, $F(1, 382) = 87.29$, $p < .001$. This indicates a statistically significant predictive relationship, but does not establish causation.

Regression Coefficients for Kidnapping

The corresponding coefficient estimates are presented below.

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Constant	4.073	0.125	-	32.67	< .001	3.827	4.318
Kidnapping	−0.431	0.046	−0.431	−9.34	< .001	−0.522	−0.341

Kidnapping significantly and negatively predicted students' perceived academic achievement ($B = -0.431$, $\beta = -0.431$, $t = -9.34$, $p < .001$). Greater reported exposure to kidnapping was associated with lower perceived achievement. The 95% confidence interval ranged from −0.522 to −0.341

and did not include zero. Since $p < .001$, the null hypothesis that kidnapping does not significantly predict students' academic achievement was rejected. The findings indicate a significant negative predictive relationship between kidnapping and students' perceived academic achievement in Katsina State.

Research Question Three: What is the joint influence of banditry and kidnapping on students' academic achievement among secondary school students in Katsina State?

Table 7: Multiple Regression Model Summary and ANOVA for Banditry and Kidnapping as Joint Predictors of Academic Achievement

A. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.592	0.350	0.347	0.808	1.96

B. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	134.05	2	67.025	102.58	< .001
Residual	248.95	381	0.653		
Total	383.00	383			

Table 7 shows that banditry and kidnapping jointly predicted students' perceived academic achievement, $R = .592$, $R^2 = .350$, adjusted $R^2 = .347$, $F(2, 381) = 102.58$, $p < .001$. Together, the predictors accounted for 35.0% of the variance in perceived achievement; the remaining 65.0% was unexplained by this model and may reflect other factors and random variation.

The regression sum of squares was 134.05, and the residual sum of squares was 248.95. The corresponding mean squares were 67.025 and 0.653, respectively, yielding $F = 67.025 \div 0.653 =$

102.58. The standard error of the estimate was approximately 0.808, representing the typical size of prediction errors in the model.

Table 8: Regression Coefficients and Multicollinearity Statistics for Banditry and Kidnapping Predicting Academic Achievement

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	4.970	0.144	-	34.44	< .001	4.687	5.253	-	-
Banditry	−0.414	0.042	−0.414	−9.80	< .001	−0.497	−0.331	.987	1.01
Kidnapping	−0.344	0.042	−0.344	−8.14	< .001	−0.427	−0.261	.987	1.01

Table 8 shows that banditry and kidnapping each made a statistically significant negative contribution to students' perceived academic achievement when entered into the regression model simultaneously. Banditry had a standardized coefficient of $\beta = -0.414$ ($t = -9.80$, $p < .001$), while kidnapping had a standardized coefficient of $\beta = -0.344$ ($t = -8.14$, $p < .001$). The confidence intervals for both predictors excluded zero, supporting the significance of their coefficients. Banditry had the larger absolute standardized coefficient in this model.

The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(2, 381) = 102.58$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis that banditry and kidnapping do not jointly predict students' academic achievement was rejected. The results indicate that both variables jointly and significantly predicted students' **perceived** academic achievement in Katsina State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that banditry significantly and negatively predicted students' perceived academic achievement in Katsina State. Greater reported exposure to banditry was associated with lower perceived achievement. Possible explanations include school closures, damage to educational facilities, displacement of students and teachers, and disruptions to instruction. Fear, anxiety and psychological distress may also make it more difficult for students to concentrate and

participate in learning. These findings align with Ahmed and Ibrahim (2023), who reported an association between insecurity and lower academic performance in conflict-affected communities in northern Nigeria, and Yusuf and Abdullahi (2024), who linked banditry to increased absenteeism and declining achievement among secondary-school students. This also aligns with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, which suggests that safety concerns can make it harder for students to focus on learning.

Kidnapping also significantly and negatively predicted students' perceived academic achievement. Fear of abduction may lead parents to keep children at home, while students exposed to kidnapping may experience anxiety or trauma that affects their participation in learning. This finding is consistent with Bello, Umar and Musa (2025), who associated kidnapping with changes in attendance, motivation and academic engagement in north-western Nigeria, and Mohammed and Sani (2024), who reported lower academic achievement among students exposed to kidnapping. These findings provide context for the present result, although this study measured perceived achievement and does not establish that kidnapping caused a change in students' performance.

Banditry and kidnapping jointly accounted for 35% of the variance in students' perceived academic achievement in the regression model. This suggests that the two forms of insecurity, considered together, were significant predictors of perceived achievement. Displacement, fear, trauma and interruptions to schooling may limit students' opportunities to learn. The finding is consistent with Ibrahim, Lawal and Garba (2025), who identified insecurity as a predictor of educational outcomes in northwestern Nigeria. It also underscores the importance of school-safety efforts. Because the study used a correlational design and a perceived-achievement measure, its results should not be interpreted as proof of causal effects on students' measured academic performance.

Educational Implications

The findings have several implications for education policy and practice:

1. Insecurity may undermine the benefits of public investment in education by interrupting teaching and learning.
2. Education planners should include security considerations in school-development plans, particularly in areas affected by violence.

3. School administrators should develop emergency-preparedness and response plans.
4. Schools should provide counselling and other appropriate support for students affected by trauma.
5. Teachers working in insecure areas may need additional support and resources.
6. Safe learning environments are essential for effective teaching and learning. Safe-school policies and initiatives should therefore be implemented and monitored.
7. School-Based Management Committees should be involved in planning, managing and monitoring school activities and improvement efforts.
8. Emergency-learning arrangements should help maintain educational opportunities when banditry, kidnapping or other emergencies disrupt normal schooling.
9. Online or other distance-learning options may provide continuity during disruptions where learners and teachers have suitable devices, connectivity and support.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that banditry and kidnapping were significant negative predictors of students' perceived academic achievement among secondary-school students in Katsina State, both individually and jointly. Insecurity may disrupt education through school closures, absenteeism, psychological distress, interruptions to teaching and reduced access to learning. Since the study measured perceived achievement and used a correlational design, it does not establish that banditry or kidnapping caused changes in students' actual academic performance. Nevertheless, the findings highlight the need to address security risks affecting schools and students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Federal and state governments should strengthen school security by deploying trained personnel and coordinating appropriate protective measures.
2. The Safe Schools Programme should be extended to vulnerable communities across Katsina State.

3. Community-based security initiatives should complement government efforts to protect schools.
4. School administrators should establish security committees to monitor and promptly report threats.
5. Schools should strengthen counselling services and provide psychosocial support to affected students.
6. The government should provide rehabilitation and educational support for students displaced by insecurity.
7. Parents, community leaders and religious organisations should work with relevant security agencies to promote school safety.
8. Special educational interventions should support students whose learning has been disrupted by banditry and kidnapping.
9. Further research should examine other factors associated with insecurity and educational outcomes in Nigeria, using direct measures of students' academic performance where possible.

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