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IMPACT OF BANDITRY, INSURGENCIES, AND TERRORISM ON SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

This paper explore the impact of banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism on school management in Nigeria. Depending on secondary data obtained from recognized online and print resources. The paper concluded that disruption of school operations and administration, threats to safety and security of school personnel and students, increased administrative and financial burden, staff shortages and low staff morale, decline in student enrollment and attendance, psychological and emotional challenges for school administrators, weakening of policy implementation and educational governance and destruction of school infrastructure and administrative records are direct impact of banditry, insurgencies and terrorism on school management in Nigeria. Based on The findings, the study recommends strengthening school security infrastructure, enhanced collaboration between schools and security agencies, increased funding and financial support for school management, capacity building and training for school administrators, psychosocial support for administrators, teachers, and students, community engagement and stakeholder participation, adoption of flexible and innovative administrative strategies, strengthening educational policies and legal frameworks, addressing root causes of insecurity and monitoring, evaluation, and research support.

Keywords: Banditry, Insurgencies, Terrorism, School management

1.0 Introduction

Education remains a critical instrument for national development, social integration, and human capital formation in Nigeria. Effective school management is essential for the realization of educational goals, as it ensures a safe learning environment, efficient administration, and optimal teaching–learning processes. However, in recent years, the Nigerian education system has faced severe disruptions due to escalating security challenges, particularly banditry, insurgencies, and

terrorism. These violent activities have increasingly targeted schools, educators, and learners, thereby threatening the sustainability of educational development across the country.

Banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism have manifested in various forms across different regions of Nigeria. While insurgency and terrorism—most notably associated with extremist groups—have been prevalent in the North-East, banditry has intensified in the North-West and parts of the North-Central regions. Schools have become vulnerable targets, resulting in frequent attacks, mass abductions of students and teachers, destruction of school infrastructure, and prolonged closures of educational institutions. These security threats have not only undermined access to education but have also created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty within school communities.

The impact of these security challenges extends beyond physical violence to significantly affect school management practices. School administrators are confronted with unprecedented difficulties in ensuring student safety, maintaining staff morale, managing resources, and sustaining academic activities. Routine administrative functions such as student enrollment, teacher retention, supervision, and curriculum delivery are increasingly compromised. Moreover, school managers are compelled to divert limited resources toward security measures, often at the expense of instructional quality and infrastructural development.

Despite the gravity of the problem, there remains a need for systematic research that examines the interconnected effects of banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism on school management in Nigeria. Understanding how these security challenges influence administrative effectiveness, policy implementation, and institutional stability is crucial for developing responsive strategies that can safeguard education in conflict-affected areas. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the impact of banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism on school management in Nigeria, with the aim of providing evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, educational administrators, and security stakeholders.

2.0 Conceptual Terms

2.1 Concept of School Management

School management refers to the systematic process of planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling human, material, and financial resources within an educational institution in order to achieve stated educational goals effectively and efficiently. It encompasses administrative, instructional, and support functions aimed at creating a conducive teaching and learning environment. Key components of school management include leadership, decision-making, staff supervision, student discipline, curriculum implementation, resource allocation, and school–community relations.

Effective school management ensures accountability, safety, quality instruction, and optimal utilization of resources. School managers such as principals and head teachers play a critical role in policy implementation, conflict resolution, and the promotion of academic excellence. In

insecure environments, school management also involves crisis management, security planning, and safeguarding students and staff. Poor school management, on the other hand, can lead to inefficiency, low staff morale, declining academic performance, and institutional instability (Adeyemi, 2011; Okorie, 2015).

2.2 Concept of Banditry

Banditry refers to organized criminal activities involving armed groups who engage in acts such as robbery, kidnapping, cattle rustling, extortion, and violent attacks on communities and institutions. In Nigeria, banditry has become a major internal security challenge, particularly in the North-West and parts of the North-Central regions. Bandits often operate in rural and semi-urban areas, exploiting weak security structures, poverty, unemployment, and porous borders.

Banditry poses a serious threat to social and economic development, including the education sector. Schools have increasingly become targets of bandit attacks, leading to mass abductions of students and teachers, destruction of school facilities, forced school closures, and displacement of learners (Ogunode, Godwin & Unoaku, 2021).. These acts disrupt school management processes by undermining safety, increasing operational costs, and reducing access to education. Banditry also instills fear among parents, teachers, and students, thereby weakening community trust in educational institutions (Albert, 2017; Akinwale, 2020).

2.3 Concept of Insurgency

Insurgency is a form of armed rebellion carried out by non-state actors against an established government or authority with the aim of overthrowing, weakening, or challenging state control. It often involves the use of violence, propaganda, intimidation, and terror to achieve political, ideological, or religious objectives. In Nigeria, insurgency has been most prominent in the North-East region, where extremist groups have carried out prolonged violent campaigns.

Insurgency has severe implications for education and school management. Insurgent activities frequently involve attacks on schools, killing or abducting teachers and students, and the destruction of educational infrastructure. These actions disrupt academic calendars, discourage school attendance, and strain the capacity of school administrators to manage institutions effectively. School managers in insurgency-affected areas face challenges such as staff shortages, trauma management, declining enrollment, and the need to operate under emergency conditions. Insurgency thus undermines the right to education and threatens the long-term development of the educational system (Onuoha, 2014; UNICEF, 2021).

2.4 Concept of Terrorism

Terrorism is a complex and globally recognized security challenge that poses serious threats to peace, stability, and development. It involves the use of violence and intimidation, particularly against civilians, to achieve political, ideological, religious, or social objectives. In contemporary

societies, terrorism has increasingly affected governance systems, economic activities, and social institutions, including education. Understanding the concept of terrorism is therefore essential for developing effective prevention, management, and response strategies, especially in countries facing persistent security threats such as Nigeria. Terrorism lacks a universally accepted definition due to its political, ideological, and contextual interpretations. However, most definitions emphasize violence, fear, and coercion as its core elements. According to Hoffman (2006), terrorism is the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in pursuit of political change. Similarly, the United Nations defines terrorism as criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public for political purposes (UN, 2004).

Terrorism typically targets non-combatants, public institutions, and symbolic infrastructures to attract attention, undermine authority, and coerce governments or societies into submission. These acts may include bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, arson, and mass shootings. In Nigeria, terrorism has emerged as a major internal security problem, particularly since the early 2000s. Terrorist activities have included suicide bombings, mass killings, abductions, and attacks on public infrastructure. These acts have destabilized communities, displaced populations, and disrupted social services. Terrorism has also targeted schools, religious centers, and government institutions, undermining public trust and national cohesion (Albert, 2017).

3.0 Method

Impact of banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism on school management in Nigeria is a position paper that adopted a systematic literature review-based method. The method allows to collect and review the related previous literature from various online sources. With the aid of digital platform, the researcher collected secondary information to generate knowledge on this topic from 2015-2025. The position paper followed qualitative narrative design method. The researcher has visited different online sites to collect the previous literature and analyze the Impact of banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism on school management in Nigeria. The previous findings are critically analyzed and presented in different themes as on the Impact of banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism on school management in Nigeria (Adapted from Ogunode, 2025).

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion

This output of the literatures on the Impact of banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism on school management in Nigeria presents an in-depth study and result that can infer conclusion on the topic. The study includes: online publication; conference paper, journals sorted from reputable international journals such as CEON, Elsevier, Hindawi, JSTOR, IEEE, Learn Techlib, SAGE, Nebraska and Springer (Adapted from Ogunode, 2025v).

Exclusion

Also, the literature review excludes information from edited books, preprints, monographs, information below 2015 and book chapters (Adapted from Ogunode, 2025).

4.0 Result and Discussion on Impact of Banditry, Insurgencies, and Terrorism on School Administration in Nigeria

School administration plays a crucial role in ensuring effective teaching and learning through proper planning, coordination, supervision, and management of educational resources. In Nigeria, however, the increasing incidence of banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism has significantly undermined the effectiveness of school administration, particularly in conflict-affected regions. These security challenges have disrupted administrative functions, weakened institutional stability, and threatened access to quality education. This section examines the multifaceted impacts of banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism on school administration in Nigeria.

Disruption of School Operations and Administration

One of the most direct impacts of banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism on school administration is the frequent disruption of academic activities. Violent attacks on schools often result in temporary or prolonged closures, forcing administrators to suspend teaching, examinations, and extracurricular activities (Ogunode, & Ndubuisi, 2021). School calendars are repeatedly altered, making effective planning and coordination difficult. Administrators are compelled to operate under emergency conditions, which undermines long-term strategic planning and policy implementation (Ogunode & Musa, 2020).

Threats to Safety and Security of School Personnel and Students

School administrators bear the responsibility of ensuring the safety of students and staff. However, banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism have exposed administrators to enormous challenges in fulfilling this duty (Ogunode & Kolo, 2021). Attacks involving killings, bombings, and mass abductions of students and teachers have created a climate of fear and insecurity within school communities. As a result, school administrators spend considerable time and resources on security arrangements rather than academic leadership. This situation weakens administrative efficiency and distracts from core educational objectives (UNESCO, 2020).

Increased Administrative and Financial Burden

The rise in insecurity has imposed additional financial and administrative burdens on school management. Administrators are often required to allocate scarce resources to security-related expenses such as fencing, surveillance equipment, private security personnel, and emergency preparedness measures (Ogunode, & Ahaotu, 2021).. These unplanned expenditures reduce funds available for instructional materials, staff development, and infrastructural maintenance. In many

public schools, administrators lack adequate funding to address these security demands, further limiting their effectiveness (Akinwale, 2020).

Staff Shortages and Low Staff Morale

Banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism have contributed significantly to teacher attrition and staff shortages in affected areas. Many teachers and non-teaching staff request transfers, resign, or refuse postings to high-risk zones (Ogunode, Umeora, & Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2022). School administrators face difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified personnel, which affects supervision, workload distribution, and instructional quality. Furthermore, fear, trauma, and job insecurity negatively affect staff morale, reducing productivity and commitment to administrative duties (Onuoha, 2014).

Decline in Student Enrollment and Attendance

Persistent insecurity discourages parents from sending their children to school, especially in areas prone to attacks and abductions. Declining enrollment and irregular attendance complicate school administration tasks such as class organization, record keeping, and assessment planning. School administrators also struggle to enforce discipline and maintain academic standards when students experience frequent interruptions in schooling due to displacement and insecurity (UNICEF, **2021).** Terrorism significantly hampers national development by diverting resources from social services to security operations. It disrupts economic activities, weakens governance structures, and erodes human capital development (.Ogunode, & Chijindu, 2022). In the education sector, terrorism leads to school closures, displacement of learners, and administrative instability. These broader implications highlight the need for a comprehensive understanding of terrorism as both a security and developmental issue (UNESCO, 2020).

Psychological and Emotional Challenges for School Administrators

School administrators themselves are not immune to the psychological effects of insecurity. Exposure to violence, threats, and the responsibility of managing traumatized staff and students place enormous emotional strain on administrators. Stress, anxiety, and burnout affect their decision-making capacity, leadership effectiveness, and overall job performance. These psychological challenges often remain unaddressed due to limited institutional support systems (Okorie, 2015).

Weakening of Policy Implementation and Educational Governance

Banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism undermine the effective implementation of educational policies and reforms. Insecurity limits government supervision, inspection, and monitoring of schools, particularly in remote and conflict-affected regions. School administrators operate with minimal oversight and support, leading to inconsistencies in policy enforcement and

administrative standards. This weakens educational governance and accountability structures across the affected regions (Albert, 2017). Ogunode, N. J & Ukozor C. U (2022b)

Destruction of School Infrastructure and Administrative Records

Violent attacks often involve the destruction of school buildings, offices, equipment, and administrative records. Loss of records such as student files, financial documents, and staff records disrupts administrative continuity and accountability. Rebuilding damaged infrastructure further delays administrative recovery and strains already limited resources (UNESCO, 2020). Ogunode, N,. J. & Adanna, C,. M. (2022)

4.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

Banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism have had profound and far-reaching impacts on school administration in Nigeria. These security challenges disrupt school operations, threaten safety, increase administrative burdens, weaken staff capacity, and undermine educational governance. School administrators are forced to function in highly unstable environments that compromise their effectiveness and the overall quality of education delivery. Based on this findings, the paper recommends the following:

1) Strengthening School Security Infrastructure

Government at all levels should prioritize the strengthening of security infrastructure in schools, particularly those located in high-risk and conflict-prone areas. This includes the provision of perimeter fencing, controlled access points, surveillance systems, alarm mechanisms, and well-lit school environments. Schools should also be supported with trained security personnel who understand child protection and school safety protocols. Strengthening physical security will enhance administrators' capacity to safeguard lives and property, thereby restoring confidence among students, staff, and parents.

2) Enhanced Collaboration Between Schools and Security Agencies

Effective collaboration between school management and security agencies such as the Nigeria Police Force, Civil Defence Corps, and local vigilante groups is essential. School administrators should be formally integrated into community-based security networks to enable early warning, intelligence sharing, and rapid response to threats. Regular patrols around school premises and emergency response drills should be institutionalized to reduce vulnerability to attacks.

3) Increased Funding and Financial Support for School Management

Adequate funding should be provided to schools to enable administrators to cope with the additional responsibilities imposed by insecurity. Special intervention funds should be allocated for security-related needs without compromising instructional resources. Financial autonomy,

accompanied by accountability mechanisms, will allow school managers to respond promptly to emerging security challenges and maintain administrative efficiency.

4) Capacity Building and Training for School Administrators

School administrators should be trained in crisis management, emergency preparedness, conflict resolution, and trauma-informed leadership. Such training will equip school managers with the skills required to make sound decisions during security crises and to manage disrupted academic activities effectively. Continuous professional development programs should incorporate security management as a core component of educational leadership in Nigeria.

5) Psychosocial Support for Administrators, Teachers, and Students

Government and educational stakeholders should establish psychosocial support systems to address trauma, stress, and emotional exhaustion caused by violence. Counseling services, mental health programs, and peer support initiatives should be made available to school administrators, teachers, and students. Addressing psychological wellbeing will improve morale, leadership effectiveness, and overall school management performance.

6) Community Engagement and Stakeholder Participation

Active involvement of parents, traditional leaders, religious organizations, and community-based associations in school security and management is vital. School administrators should foster strong school–community relationships that promote collective responsibility for protecting educational institutions. Community ownership of schools can deter attacks and enhance trust, cooperation, and resilience.

7) Adoption of Flexible and Innovative Administrative Strategies

School management should adopt flexible administrative approaches to cope with insecurity, such as alternative school calendars, blended learning models, and temporary relocation of schools where necessary. The use of digital platforms for record keeping, communication, and instructional supervision can help administrators maintain continuity during periods of disruption. These strategies will reduce the long-term impact of insecurity on school administration.

8) Strengthening Educational Policies and Legal Frameworks

Government should strengthen and enforce policies that protect education from attack, in line with international frameworks such as the Safe Schools Declaration. Clear guidelines should be developed for school administrators on managing security risks, emergency closures, and post-attack recovery. Strong legal consequences for attacks on schools will serve as a deterrent to perpetrators.

9) Addressing Root Causes of Insecurity

Beyond immediate security measures, government should address the socio-economic factors that fuel banditry, insurgencies, and terrorism, such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and social exclusion. Sustainable development initiatives, youth empowerment programs, and inclusive governance will contribute to long-term peace and stability, thereby improving the operating environment for school management.

10) Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Support

Continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be established to assess the effectiveness of security interventions in schools. Educational researchers and institutions should be encouraged to conduct empirical studies on insecurity and school management to inform evidence-based policies. Data-driven decision-making will enhance the resilience and effectiveness of school administration in Nigeria.

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