

INSECURITY AND TEACHERS' JOB DEDICATION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NORTH-CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract

Insecurity jeopardizes not only the stability and quality of public secondary education in the North. As a result, this study investigated into how teachers' dedication to their jobs was affected by insecurity in North-Central Nigerian public secondary schools. The study was guided by two research questions and tested one hypothesis. Using a multi-stage sample technique, 800 instructors were selected from three states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), whereas 49,365 public secondary school teachers from the North-Central geopolitical zone made up the study population. Multiple regression analysis and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, which were gathered via a structured questionnaire. Findings reveal, the most pressing insecurity concerns facing secondary schools are armed robberies, harassment, and kidnappings. The findings also showed that respondents had a poor degree of job dedication, indicating that teachers' dedication to their professional duties is negatively impacted by insecurity. Regression analysis demonstrated that insecurity significantly predicts teacher job dedication. According to the study's findings, strengthening security in and around schools is essential to raising teacher dedication and improve education standards. In order to lessen teachers' susceptibility, the study suggests that security agencies, state governments, and the Federal Capital Territory enhance public secondary schools' security, particularly in remote locations, and that administrators put safety measures including community policing, emergency response systems, and fencing in place.

Keywords: Insecurity, Job Dedication, Public Secondary Schools, North-Central Nigeria, Teacher Dedication

1. Introduction

Globally, education is acknowledged as a major force behind political stability, economic growth, and social change. As a link between elementary school and higher education, secondary education in Nigeria plays a crucial role in forming the skills, values, and goals of the next generation. As the keepers of this process, teachers are essential to the successful delivery of the curriculum, the development of students' character, and their general growth. One of the important factors influencing educational outcomes is their level of job dedication, which includes their motivation, loyalty, and dedication to their professional duties (Akinyemi, 2020). Sadly, rising levels of insecurity throughout Nigeria have become a serious danger to this dedication, with disastrous results for both educators and students.

Over the past 20 years, one of the areas most impacted by insecurity is Nigeria's North-Central geopolitical zone. Community conflicts, farmer-herder disputes, terrorism, kidnapping for ransom, and banditry are only a few of the issues that have drastically changed the educational scene. Schools are frequently attacked, instructors and students are kidnapped, educational facilities are destroyed, and schools are forced to close as a result of these threats (Okoli & Agada, 2021). These circumstances provide a dangerous atmosphere that weakens teachers' sense of security, lowers their morale, and makes them less inclined to stick with teaching.

In order to achieve quality education in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which places an emphasis on inclusive and equitable education for all, teachers' dedication to their jobs is essential. However, insecurity weakens teachers' feeling of community and decreases their dedication to essential work duties like mentorship, lesson planning, classroom management, and extracurricular involvement (Ogunode, 2022). Teachers who feel that their personal safety is in danger may look for a transfer to a place that is thought to be safer, become less enthusiastic about their work, or even quit teaching entirely. Thus, insecurity jeopardizes not only the stability and quality of public secondary education in the North-Central region, but also the welfare of teachers.

The adverse consequences of insecurity affect the entire educational system, not just certain teachers. The school calendar is disrupted by frequent school closures brought on by violent attacks, and the quality of education is compromised by lower teacher dedication and attendance. Because mistrust and dread permeate

the educational environment, insecurity also erodes ties between the community and schools (Imhonopi & Uche, 2023). These systemic impacts highlight the need to investigate the relationship between job instability and teachers' dedication, especially in public secondary schools where staff welfare is frequently neglected and resources are already scarce.

Research shows that both internal and external influences influence teachers' dedication. The safety of teachers in their workplace has been repeatedly recognized as essential, even though elements like pay, training opportunities, and advancement play important roles (Odukoya et al., 2018; Orike, 2019). In addition to lowering morale, unsafe workplaces can result in higher teacher retention rates. An important background for examining this phenomenon is provided by the North-Central area, which has seen numerous attacks on schools in states including Niger, Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa, Plateau, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Additionally, psychosocial stressors brought on by instability have an impact on teachers' general dedication, job happiness, and mental health. Declining motivation can be caused by a variety of factors, including fear of violence, trauma from conflict exposure, and anxiety about safety (Eze & Okolie, 2020). Under such pressures, teachers could prioritize survival tactics over content delivery, student mentoring, or innovative pedagogy. This jeopardizes Nigeria's long-term human capital basis and undercuts the country's larger educational development objectives.

Although insecurity is widely acknowledged as a major national issue, little empirical study has explicitly looked at how it affects teachers' dedication to their jobs in Nigeria, especially in the North-Central region. The majority of current research discusses general educational issues without methodically relating teachers' levels of dedication to insecurity. It is crucial to conduct a thorough investigation into this matter because of the region's frequent incidents of school attacks, teacher abductions, and neighborhood disputes. Academically and policy-wise, such a study is warranted since it will expand on the body of knowledge regarding the relationship between insecurity and teacher dedication and offer evidence-based suggestions to security institutions, education administrators, and government agencies. Maintaining public secondary education, making Nigeria's educational system more resilient, and protecting the future of millions of students in conflict-prone areas all depend on teachers' dedication to their jobs being strengthened in the face of uncertainty.

Conceptual Meaning of Insecurity

Numerous scholars have defined insecurity from a variety of disciplinary viewpoints, such as sociology, political science, and psychology. Some definitions stress the subjective emotional state of fear and worry, while others concentrate on objective threats like starvation and criminality. Lack of security, stability, or defense against damage is the common thread that runs across all of these interpretations. Achumba, et al. (2013) provide two definitions of insecurity. The first definition of insecurity is the state of being vulnerable to danger or the threat of danger, whereas danger is the state of being at risk of harm or injury. Second, insecurity is the state of being at danger or experiencing worry, which is a hazy, disagreeable feeling that is felt in expectation of some bad thing happening. Beland (2005) in Olabode (2024) defines insecurity as feeling unsafe and not being protected from psychological harm, emotional stress brought on by a lack of confidence that one is accepted, has the opportunity and choices to reach one's own potential, and is free from fear.

In current study, the concept of insecurity is widely acknowledged as a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses psychological, economic, and sociopolitical vulnerabilities in addition to physical dangers. Insecurity is frequently seen as a state of ongoing uncertainty resulting from instability in social, economic, and institutional systems in places like North America and Europe. Both objective exposure to dangers and subjective feelings of fear and worry about possible damage or future deprivation are reflected. For example, while economic approaches emphasize insecurity as a forward-looking condition shaped by anticipated risks and limited recovery mechanisms within changing labor markets and welfare systems, psychological perspectives emphasize how systemic disruptions in societal structures generate stress and reduce individuals' capacity to adapt (Collins, 2025; Gallo et al., 2024).

Insecurity is more frequently positioned within socio-political and developmental contexts in developing nations, especially in Africa, Asia, and South America. It is defined as a condition that frequently shows up as war, crime, unemployment, and institutional fragility and is based on structural inequality, poor governance, poverty, and social injustice. Because it impedes economic activity, erodes state legitimacy, and exacerbates social fragmentation, scholars in these areas emphasize that insecurity is both a cause and an effect of underdevelopment. Notwithstanding regional differences, the worldwide literature constantly comes to the conclusion that insecurity is context-dependent, encompasses perceived and actual dangers, and has profound effects on social cohesiveness, political stability, and human development (Sarafa & Monday, 2024).

The condition of being vulnerable to risks, hazards, or threats that compromise security and stability is known as insecurity. To Imhonopi and Urim (2019), insecurity is the lack of safety and stability and is frequently typified by recurring threats to people's lives, property, and social institutions. In the opinion of Adebayo (2020), insecurity is a state of vulnerability and dread brought on by crime, violence, and the inability of the state to provide justice and safety. Eze and Okeke (2021), posit that, insecurity is a socio-political state in which people and communities cannot be sure they will be safe because of frequent conflicts, kidnappings, and armed attacks.

According to Adebayo (2020), insurgency, kidnappings, communal conflicts, banditry, armed robbery, and cult-related activities are examples of insecurity in the educational setting that endanger the physical and mental safety of teachers and students. In North-Central Nigeria, insecurity has emerged as a major issue for schools, frequently resulting in absenteeism, fear, and a decline in the quality of instruction (Aondoakaa, 2021). Insecurity, according to Onifade et al. (2022), is the incapacity of people or communities to live without ongoing threats from terrorism, insurgency, and other criminal activities that jeopardize social and economic advancement. Threats, hazards, or risks that compromise school safety and stability are referred to as insecurity in education. The well-being of teachers and students is at risk in Nigeria due to insurgency, kidnappings, banditry, armed robbery, and community conflicts (Abubakar, et al. 2023). These circumstances impair teacher morale, interfere with the teaching and learning process, and increase absenteeism.

Scholars generally agree that insecurity is a condition of vulnerability, fear, and instability brought on by persistent dangers like crime, violence, and ineffective governance systems that together jeopardize development, safety, and education. It causes worry about individual's objectives, connections, and capacity to manage particular circumstances. Everyone experiences insecurity occasionally. It can arise from a number of sources and manifest in all facets of life.

Insecurity in Nigerian Schools

The term insecurity in Nigerian schools describes the frequent exposure of teachers and students to dangers like terrorism, armed robbery, communal conflicts, kidnapping, and farmer-herder disputes in Nigerian schools. These threats disturb the learning environment, weaken teachers' dedication to their jobs, and lower the standard of education (Imhonopi & Urim, 2019; Eze & Okeke, 2021). In addition to representing institutional instability and physical dangers to life, insecurity in Nigerian schools also reflects socio-political upheaval, poor governance, and insufficient protections (Adebayo, 2020; Onifade, Adeola, & Mohammed, 2022).

According to studies, there are several types of insecurity in Nigerian secondary schools, with banditry, farmer-herder conflicts, and ethno-religious conflicts making the North-Central region especially vulnerable (Salihu & Yahaya, 2020). Many schools have closed or are operating under restricted conditions as a result of the increased concern among parents and teachers caused by the frequency of kidnappings for ransom (Audu, 2021). According to Abubakar et al. (2023), this kind of instability frequently results in reduced student enrollment, teacher absence, and school closures. Likewise, Anho (2022) emphasized that educators in unstable settings find it difficult to sustain their pedagogical and professional dedication, which has an impact on the quality of instruction. In addition to endangering safety, these disturbances also call into question public education's credibility as a reliable and stable institution. Scholars across the world observe that unsafe surroundings lower the quality of learning results (UNESCO, 2021). Teachers in these situations frequently experience psychological stress, burnout, and decreased motivation, all of which impair their ability to teach effectively (Waweru & Njenga, 2018).

Theoretically, school insecurity affects not only academic achievement but also the legitimacy of Nigeria's educational system as a whole by acting as a barrier to access and a destabilizer of learning results. In summary, insecurity in Nigerian schools refers to ongoing threats, kidnapping, violence, intercommunal conflicts, and terrorism that jeopardize safety, interfere with instruction, and lower teacher dedication. It undermines the quality of education, the validity of the school, and the overall development of the students by reflecting poor governance and institutional instability.

Teachers Job Dedication

Teacher dedication is a strong, positive emotional attachment to the teaching profession, which is shown by a focus on the academic and emotional needs of students, a willingness to go above and beyond for students and the school, and a dedication to lifelong learning and professional development. It also entails appreciating the significance of the work, carrying out responsibilities to the best of one's ability, and cultivating a strong desire to improve the lives of students. According to Schaufeli et al. (2002), job dedication is a characteristic of work engagement that is typified by passion, motivation, pride, and dedication to one's position. According to Okeke and Orji (2019), teachers' job dedication is the willingness to invest time and energy in instructional delivery and student development despite resource constraints. Azeem and Akhtar (2014) define job dedication as the passion, sense of responsibility, and consistent effort teachers display in performing academic duties.

According to Salami and Ajayi (2021), teachers' dedication to their jobs is the internal motivation to go above and beyond their contractual duties by devoting their time and energy to teaching. Teachers' dedication is defined by Nwankwo and Adebayo (2022) as their unwavering dedication especially in the face of adversity, to moral principles, effective teaching, and school development. The level of psychological attachment and dedication teachers exhibit to their work, tasks, and obligations is known as their job dedication. Consistent classroom attendance, well-prepared lessons, student mentoring, and active involvement in school events are all indicators of high work dedication (Eze & Okoro, 2019). However, by encouraging anxiety, absenteeism, and attrition, insecure workplaces may weaken teachers' dedication (Ogunyemi, 2022). The role of teachers, the level of loyalty, psychological attachment, and dedication educators exhibit in their work is known as dedication. Being on time, delivering lessons well, mentoring, and participating in school events are all signs of dedication (Usman, Akinnubi, & Ayoku, 2018). Teachers become less dedicated when they believe their workplace is unsafe, which has an impact on students' academic performance (Adebayo & Ileuma, 2023).

A deep psychological, emotional, and professional dedication to the teaching role, marked by zeal, accountability, and a strong sense of purpose, is a common conceptualization of teachers' job dedication in modern educational literature. Dedication, for example, is defined in European-based research as the extent to which teachers pour energy, identity, and excitement into instructional activities and feel personally accountable for their job, showing both professional engagement and emotional dedication (Türk & Korkmaz, 2022). In a similar vein, research from both domestic and international settings highlights the tight relationship between dedication and meaningful work, where educators view their function as important, meaningful, and contributing to the advancement of society, which boosts motivation and perseverance (Lavy, 2022). According to Asian literature, teacher dedication is further defined as a positive, high-energy psychological state that includes a strong desire for ongoing professional development and student success, alignment with institutional goals, and a readiness to perform professional obligations (Ertürk, 2023).

Teachers' dedication to their work is frequently framed in the context of societal development and educational goals in Africa and other developing regions, where it is perceived as an internal motivator that forces teachers to invest time, energy, and emotional resources in enhancing student outcomes and school effectiveness. According to African research, dedicated teachers develop close emotional ties to their organisations and profession, which encourages creativity, perseverance, and better learning settings (Dauda, 2023). Dedicated teachers are not only committed but also deeply immersed and energized by their work, frequently going above and beyond routine expectations to achieve educational objectives, according to South American and wider global perspectives that link dedication to work engagement dimensions like vigor, absorption, and sustained involvement (Martela & Pessi, 2018).

Overall, research from many continents supports the idea that teachers' dedication to their work is a multifaceted concept that includes emotional attachment, professional accountability, intrinsic drive, and persistent effort toward student growth and instructional efficacy.

Studies on Insecurity and Teachers' Job Dedication

Recent empirical data from Asia demonstrates how insecurity-related factors, such as difficult work situations and uncertainty, affect teachers' commitment. Teachers operate under high levels of perceived obstacles and environmental insecurity, including inadequate resources and professional isolation, according to a study done in geographically remote and underprivileged districts of the Philippines. The study found that instructors retained high levels of commitment in spite of these circumstances, indicating that commitment may endure even in unstable situations, albeit it is strongly associated with wellbeing and support networks. The results show that teachers' psychological resilience may be strained by extended exposure to insecurity, which could eventually undermine the sustainability of their commitment to their jobs (Belonio et al., 2026).

In a similar vein, studies conducted in collaborative African and worldwide contexts show that teachers' commitment to their careers is significantly impacted by insecurity, which manifests as stress, job discontent, and uncertain working conditions. For instance, workplace stress, a stand-in for professional insecurity, has a detrimental impact on job satisfaction and commitment, which in turn affects instructional practices, according to Zakariya and Adegoke's (2024) analysis of the relationship between stress and job-related demands and teacher effectiveness. Additional research from Nigeria demonstrates that while better working conditions boost dedication, inadequate welfare, job insecurity, and inadequate institutional support lower teachers' levels of commitment. When taken as a whole, these findings indicate that insecurity plays a crucial role in determining teachers' commitment to their jobs worldwide, either limiting or modifying their professional involvement based on contextual support networks (Zakariya & Adegoke, 2024; Okemakinde, 2025).

Numerous empirical studies demonstrate how insecurity in Nigeria has a detrimental effect on teachers' dedication to their jobs. For example, a mixed-methods study by Imhonopi and Urim (2019) discovered that low morale and teacher absenteeism in public secondary schools were caused by the rising number of kidnappings and armed attacks. As a coping strategy, teachers who were exposed to violent situations frequently reduced their involvement in school-related activities. In a similar vein, Eze and Okeke (2021) polled 420 teachers in North-Central Nigeria and found that armed robberies and intercommunal conflicts decreased instructors' motivation to plan classes, guide pupils, or participate in extracurricular activities. The survey underlined that teachers are forced to put their personal safety ahead of their professional obligations due to insecurity.

In their qualitative research of schools in Plateau and Benue States, Ojukwu and Onuoha (2021) found that teacher psychological dedication was weakened by unsafe school surroundings resulting from farmer-herder disputes. Student support systems were undermined as a result of teachers at impacted schools limiting their dedication to modest work demands. Regression analysis was also used by Nwankwo and Adebayo (2022) to demonstrate a statistically significant inverse association between teachers' job devotion and insecurity. Their results demonstrated how ongoing insecurity immediately impairs professional accountability and lowers the standard of training.

It is often known that job uncertainty and teachers' dedication to their jobs are related. Teachers are more inclined to withdraw, shirk their obligations, or look for other employment if they believe their workplace is unsafe (Eze, 2019). Ajayi (2022) discovered that insecurity, especially in rural public schools in Nigeria, has a direct impact on teacher absenteeism and erodes professional dedication. In a similar vein, Okeke and Akpa (2021) contend that teachers' sense of belonging is undermined by ongoing threats, which lowers their dedication to the field. According to empirical data, teachers who experience insecurity are less inclined to oversee research projects, mentor students, or take part in extracurricular activities, which hinders students' overall development (Yusuf & Dauda, 2020).

Research demonstrates that teacher dedication is adversely affected by insecurity. According to Usman et al. (2018), insecurity has a major impact on instructors' desire to show up to class and carry out their duties. Additionally, Adebayo and Ileuma (2023) pointed out that school safety is a prerequisite for long-term teacher dedication because unsafe settings lower motivation and raise turnover. Accordingly, Anho (2022) contended that without sufficient security assurances, professional dedication cannot flourish.

It is clear from the examined studies that there are a variety of kinds of insecurity in Nigerian public secondary schools, from violent attacks to intercommunal disputes. These types of insecurity regularly lower instructors' willingness to stay dedicated to their work, regardless of contextual variations. All of the data points to the fact that job uncertainty not only reduces dedication to one's work but also jeopardizes the larger objective of delivering high-quality education and advancing national development. This is consistent with more general discussions that highlight how important safe schools are to maintaining teachers' dedication and motivation (Salami & Ajayi, 2021).

Theory for the Study

The Insecurity–Motivation–Dedication (IMD) Theory is put forth in this study (Ajadi, 2025). This argument was put up to explain the connection between job dedication among teachers in public secondary schools and insecurity. It incorporates the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), Maslow's hierarchy of requirements (Maslow, 1943), and Organizational Commitment Theory (Meyer & Allen, 1997) into a new framework. According to the hypothesis, if moderating tools aren't available, insecurity lowers teachers' sense of safety, which lowers motivation and, in turn, job dedication. According to the IMD Theory, teachers' sense of security in the classroom acts as a mediator in their dedication to their jobs. Psychological distress brought on by insecure situations (such kidnappings, insurgencies, intercommunal conflicts, or armed robberies) reduces both intrinsic and extrinsic drive. Teachers are less inclined to devote more time, effort, and creativity to their work when they are under stress. On the other hand, instructors feel psychologically comfortable in a secure setting, which improves resilience, motivation, and work dedication.

Three conceptual threads are included in the IMD theory: The first thread is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which states that safety needs are essential and that higher-order devotion (self-actualization at work) is impeded when they are not met because of insecurity (Maslow, 1943). According to Bakker and Demerouti (2007), the second is the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model, which states that insecurity is a demand that depletes teachers' psychological and physical resources and reduces job engagement. The third thread is Organizational Commitment Theory, which states that long-term uncertainty weakens normative and affective commitment, which lowers teachers' dedication to their jobs (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Accordingly, IMD Theory indicates that,

absent compensatory motivating resources (supporting leadership, community safety, and hazard allowances), teacher job dedication in public secondary schools decreases with increasing insecurity.

Problem

Teachers continue to be essential to achieving educational objectives, and education is widely acknowledged as a major force behind national progress. But in Nigeria, especially in public secondary schools, the growing wave of insecurity has become a significant barrier to teachers' dedication and efficacy. In recent years, there have been more violent attacks, kidnappings, banditry, communal conflicts, and farmer-herder conflicts that have spread into school settings in the North-Central region, which includes states like Benue, Niger, Kogi, Nasarawa, Kwara, Plateau, and the Federal Capital Territory. The vulnerability of schools in the region is demonstrated by incidents like the kidnapping of teachers and students in Niger State and frequent violent conflicts in Plateau, Kwara, Kogi and Benue States.

A climate of fear and uncertainty has been fostered by this ongoing insecurity, endangering teachers' mental health and dedication to their careers. Teachers who experience a sense of insecurity may exhibit reduced morale, more absenteeism, a hesitancy to accept assignments in remote regions, or even an early decision to leave the profession. As a result, their emotive, normative, and continuing dedication are weakened, which eventually lowers the standard of instruction and compromises academic results. The disruptive impacts of insecurity on education in general have been emphasized by national and regional research; however, there is little empirical data on how insecurity specifically affects teachers' job dedication in North-Central Nigeria. Closing this gap is essential because ongoing uncertainty and waning teacher dedication endanger not only the operation of public secondary schools but also the larger objective of delivering high-quality education for long-term national growth.

The study is guided by the following questions:

1. Which kind of insecurity are most common in North-Central Nigerian public secondary schools?
2. To what degree does insecurity affect the dedication of teachers in North-Central Nigerian public secondary schools?

Hypothesis

H₀: Insecurity has no significant influence on teachers' job dedication in public secondary schools in North-Central Nigeria

2. Method

The research design used in the study was a descriptive survey. Because it makes it possible to gather quantitative data from a sizable population in order to investigate the connection between job dedication and insecurity. The population consisted of 49,365 public secondary school teachers in Nigeria's North-Central geopolitical zone, which include: Plateau - 9,971, Kogi - 3,016, Nasarawa - 1,500, FCT - 4,152, Kwara - 8,650, Niger - 10,738 and Benue - 11,338, as at 2022/2023 academic session. The sampling procedure was multi-stage. Three states (Niger, Benue, Kogi) and the FCT were chosen at random from the North-Central zone for the first stage. Based on the reported level of insecurity, two local government areas were purposefully selected from each state and the FCT for the second stage. In addition, five schools with a teacher population of more than 20 were purposively selected from each of the two local government selected. This implies that 20 teachers were selected from each of the five schools selected per local government. In all, 800 teachers were disproportionately selected using simple random technique from the selected states and FCT.

The researcher developed a structured questionnaire title: Insecurity and Teachers' Job Dedication Questionnaire (ITJDQ). Demographic information, insecurity indicators (such as kidnapping, violent conflicts, threats, and armed robbery), and job dedication (affective, normative, and continuation dedication) comprised the three sections of the test. A 4-point Likert scale, from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, was used to measure the responses. The instrument's face and content validity were determined by specialists in test and measurement and educational management. 75 teachers from outside the states that were sampled participated in a pilot study. Good internal consistency was indicated by the reliability coefficient of 0.87, which was determined using Cronbach's Alpha.

With the assistance of trained research assistants, the questionnaire was administered directly to gather data. Strict adherence was maintained to ethical principles including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary involvement. Descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions, while the hypothesis was tested using regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

3. Findings

Research Question 1: Which kind of insecurity are most common in North-Central Nigerian public secondary schools?

Table 1 presents the mean ratings of teachers on Kinds of insecurity prevalent in schools.

Table 1: Prevalent Kinds of Insecurity in Public Secondary Schools (N = 800)

Forms of Insecurity	Mean (\bar{X})	Std. Dev.	Remark
Kidnapping/abduction of teachers/students	3.51	0.74	Very prevalent
Armed robbery/theft	3.28	0.81	Very prevalent
Farmer–herder clashes	3.21	0.85	Prevalent
Communal/ethnic clashes	3.14	0.87	Prevalent
Threats/harassment from armed groups	3.28	0.78	Very Prevalent

Criterion Mean = 2.50

Teachers' average assessments of the types of insecurity that are common in North-Central Nigerian public secondary schools are shown in Table 1. All of the given insecurity indicators received ratings above the benchmark, with a criteria mean of 2.50, suggesting that respondents view them as serious problems. The most common type of insecurity was found to be the kidnapping or abduction of teachers and students ($\bar{X} = 3.51$, $SD = 0.74$), which reflected a general concern for safety in and around schools. This was closely followed by armed robbery/theft ($\bar{X} = 3.28$, $SD = 0.81$), which was evaluated as highly widespread, and threats and harassment from armed groups ($\bar{X} = 3.28$, $SD = 0.78$). Conflicts between farmers and herders ($\bar{X} = 3.21$, $SD = 0.85$) and between communities and ethnic groups ($\bar{X} = 3.14$, $SD = 0.87$) were also found to be common, albeit with somewhat lower mean values than other types of insecurity.

Overall, the findings indicate that teachers view armed robbery, harassment, and kidnappings as the most urgent insecurity threats that impact secondary schools, while inter-communal and farmer-herder conflicts are still important despite being less prevalent. This underscores the various levels of insecurity that threaten the stability of the educational environment in the area.

These results show that there is a high level of violent insecurity in the area's schools. It might be because bandits, criminal networks, and armed organizations traveling between regions use this north central location as a strategic transit area. In Niger and Kogi States, the large uncontrolled wooded areas provide as hiding places for armed groups, which makes kidnapping and armed robbery easier. Land/resource competition, ethno-religious conflicts, and farmer-herder conflicts may also be contributing factors. Armed organizations thrive on these conflicts, taking advantage of local frustrations and focusing on vulnerable groups like students and instructors, particularly in rural schools. The outcome may also emerge from the region's pervasive poverty and unemployment, which fuel the growth of abduction for ransom and armed robbery as alternate "livelihoods" for organized gangs and idle youngsters. Because schools are seen as "soft targets" where ransom payments can be demanded from families or governments, teachers and children are specifically targeted. Furthermore, a large number of North-Central public secondary schools are situated in peri-urban or rural locations with poor policing and slow security response times. These lax security measures are taken advantage of by criminal organizations, which increases teacher and student harassment and kidnappings.

The findings align with reports by Ajayi (2019) and Wapmuk (2021), who documented similar patterns of insecurity affecting schools in Nigeria's Middle Belt region. The prevalence of these threats highlights the vulnerability of both teachers and students in the zone, often resulting in fear and disruption of academic activities.

Research Question 2: To what degree does insecurity affect the dedication of teachers in North-Central Nigerian public secondary schools?

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Insecurity and Teachers' Job Dedication

Variable	Mean (\bar{X})	Std. Dev.	Remark
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Insecurity level	3.31	0.69	High
Job dedication	2.21	0.74	Low

The descriptive data of job dedication and insecurity among teachers in public secondary schools are shown in Table 2. Teachers report a high level of insecurity in their work environment, as evidenced by the mean score for insecurity ($\bar{X} = 3.31$, $SD = 0.69$), which is higher than the criterion mean of 2.50. The mean score for teachers' job dedication, on the other hand, was below the criterion mean ($\bar{X} = 2.21$, $SD = 0.74$), indicating that respondents had a low level of job dedication. These findings suggest that increased insecurity is linked to lower levels of dedication among educators, demonstrating how dangerous learning environments might impair educators' drive, dedication, and general effectiveness.

This finding may be because hazardous school settings undermine the basic sense of security that supports dedication to one's career. Teachers frequently operate in an environment of dread and uncertainty in the North-Central region of Nigeria, where armed robberies, kidnappings, and harassment by armed groups are frequent occurrences. In addition, teachers' feeling of dedication to their profession is weakened in hazardous learning contexts. When teachers believe their work is fulfilling and sustainable, they are more dedicated. However, when schools are frequently assaulted or students are kidnapped, teachers may become disengaged, turn to survival tactics like absenteeism, or look for safer work elsewhere. Furthermore, insecurity causes teachers to experience psychological pain and ongoing anxiety, which lowers their intrinsic drive to teach. A teacher may find it difficult to focus on teaching if they worry about being kidnapped on their way to school or if they expect violence on the school grounds.

The finding is in line with that of Eze and Okeke (2021) who claimed that unsafe school surroundings lower teacher morale, which results in absence and disengagement. In a similar vein, it aligns with the [position of Nwankwo and Adebayo (2020) who contended that teachers who are constantly uneasy tend to shun extracurricular activities, which reduces their efficacy.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀: Insecurity has no significant influence on teachers' job dedication in public secondary schools in North-Central Nigeria

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Insecurity and Teachers' Job Dedication

Model	R	R ²	F	Sig. (p)	β	T
Insecurity and Dedication	0.52	0.27	34.87	0.000	-0.52	-5.90

* $p < 0.05$

The regression analysis shows that insecurity significantly predicts teachers' job dedication ($R^2 = 0.27$, $F = 34.87$, $p < 0.05$). The negative β (-0.52) indicates that as insecurity increases, teachers' job dedication decreases. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. The regression study of the influence of job insecurity on teachers' job dedication in public secondary schools is shown in Table 3. The findings indicate a moderate association between teachers' job dedication and insecurity, with a correlation coefficient of $R = 0.52$. According to the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.27$), insecurity explains 27% of the variation in teachers' job dedication, indicating that insecurity concerns may account for about one-third of teachers' dedication levels. The statistical significance of the regression model ($F = 34.87$, $p < 0.05$) validates the validity of insecurity as a predictor of teachers' job dedication. Teachers' job dedication is significantly reduced by increasing levels of insecurity, as indicated by the negative influence shown by the standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = -0.52$, $t = -5.90$).

Overall, the results show that teachers' dedication to their work in public secondary schools in North-Central Nigeria is significantly and negatively impacted by insecurity.

The result of the hypothesis tested may be due to the fact that kidnappings, armed robberies, and intercommunal conflicts have been common in North-Central Nigeria. Teachers are frequently the targets of these crimes because they are well-known members of the community. Constantly worrying about their personal safety makes them less inclined to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities, which lowers job dedication and increases absenteeism or transfers to safer areas. The disruption of regular academic activity caused by frequent attacks on schools and threats of violence may potentially be the cause. Teachers who work in these environments have increased stress and uncertainty, which saps their motivation and ability to successfully design or carry out lessons, undermining their dedication to their jobs. Additionally, local communities and families might counsel

teachers against staying in dangerous locations, which would put pressure on them to leave. Teachers' motivation to put their all into their work is diminished by the combination of this societal influence and personal dread.

This result validates the idea put forth by Imhonopi and Urim (2019) that employee dedication is eroded by insecurity, which in turn impairs organizational performance. Similarly, Ojukwu and Onuoha (2021) discovered that low educational performance, inadequate supervision, and absenteeism are caused by insecurity in Nigerian schools. Therefore, the current study confirms that poor teacher dedication is a significant factor of ongoing insecurity in North-Central Nigeria, endangering the region's educational quality.

4. Conclusions

This study looked at the connection between job dedication and insecurity among teachers in North-Central Nigerian public secondary schools. The most common types of insecurity, according to the findings, are armed robbery, harassment, and kidnapping; conflicts between farmers and herders and across communities frequently disturb school settings. According to a statistically significant negative regression outcome and low dedication levels among respondents, insecurity was found to significantly damage instructors' job dedication. These results demonstrate how urgently insecurity must be addressed as a major issue affecting teacher dedication and, consequently, educational quality. Maintaining high-quality secondary education in North-Central Nigeria requires ensuring teacher safety and bolstering their dedication. The larger objectives of national development through education are still in jeopardy if insecurity is not addressed.

The following suggestions are made in light of the study's findings, which showed that insecurity seriously impairs teachers' commitment to their jobs in public secondary schools in North-Central Nigeria:

Security agencies should work with state governments and the Federal Capital Territory Administration to improve security surrounding public secondary schools, especially in rural areas that are at risk.

To lessen teachers' feelings of vulnerability, school administrators should put safety measures in place including perimeter fencing, emergency response systems, and community policing programs.

In order to ensure that sufficient resources are allotted to secure school environments, ministries of education should incorporate teacher safety into frameworks for educational policies.

Teachers working in high-risk locations should have access to stress management programs, counseling, and hazard allowances in order to improve their psychological resilience and morale.

Via information-sharing networks and vigilance groups, local communities should be encouraged to collaborate with schools in establishing safe spaces.

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