

Research Article

Conflict, Violence, and Educational Disruptions: Evidence from Chikun Local Government, Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract : Conflict and insecurity pose significant obstacles to educational progress throughout sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in fragile contexts like northern Nigeria. This paper investigates the effects of conflict and violence on educational accessibility and attendance in Chikun Local Government Area (LGA), Kaduna State, Nigeria. Employing a mixed-methods strategy that incorporates survey information from 300 households, key informant interviews, and secondary data, the study reveals that insecurity has led to widespread school closures, decreased attendance, increased dropout rates, and heightened gender inequalities in education. Regression analysis demonstrates that income level, parental education, and proximity to conflict zones are significant indicators of school attendance. The results underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions that enhance school safety, strengthen community resilience, and provide increased psychosocial support for affected children

Keywords : conflict, violence, education, school attendance, insecurity, Chikun LGA, Kaduna State

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1. Introduction

Education is widely recognised as a fundamental human right and a cornerstone for social, economic, and political progress (Gabdo & Magaji, 2025). It equips individuals with skills and knowledge, while also reinforcing communities and promoting sustainable development (Okon, Musa, & Magaji, 2025). Nevertheless, in the context of conflict, educational access is severely compromised, making children particularly vulnerable. Nigeria, especially in the northern region, has experienced repeated instances of violence and insecurity in recent decades, stemming from insurgency and armed banditry (Abiola, Magaji, & Musa, 2025) to communal conflicts, all of which have disrupted the educational system (UNESCO, 2022; Okoli & Ugwu, 2019). Kaduna State, located in northwestern Nigeria, has become one of the focal points of these violent conflicts, with Chikun Local Government Area (LGA) representing a critical zone of insecurity characterised by bandit attacks, abductions, and school closures.

The link between conflict and education has garnered increasing global attention, as education serves both as a victim and a potential means of establishing peace in fragile societies. Research indicates that armed violence leads to direct assaults on schools, kidnappings of students and teachers, destruction of facilities, and displacement of

communities, thus undermining both access to and the quality of education (UNICEF, 2021; Olanrewaju & Okorie, 2020). Beyond immediate disruptions, the long-term consequences include depletion of human capital (United Nations, 2015), persistent intergenerational poverty (Magaji, 2002), and diminished social cohesion (Burdett, 2020). For Nigeria, where education is a crucial driver in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education (Ahmad & Magaji, 2024), the ongoing insecurity poses a serious developmental challenge (Adekoya, Magaji, & Ismail, 2025).

Chikun LGA, one of the 23 local governments in Kaduna State, has experienced rising insecurity manifested through mass kidnappings from schools, violent assaults on rural communities, and the ongoing displacement of families. The abduction of over 100 students from Bethel Baptist High School in Chikun in 2021 highlights the acute susceptibility of schools to violent acts in the area (Amnesty International, 2021). Such incidents not only generate a climate of fear among parents and students but also compel authorities to close schools, further exacerbating educational disruptions. Moreover, families forced to evacuate due to insecurity often prioritise survival over education, resulting in declining school attendance and higher dropout rates (Edeh & Ojo, 2022).

The consequences of these disruptions extend beyond individual students, impacting community resilience and prospects for future development. In Chikun LGA, educational interruptions caused by conflict have intensified the divide between rural and urban areas, with children in vulnerable rural locations facing greater obstacles to education compared to those in relatively secure urban centres (Igbokwe & Abah, 2021). Furthermore, insecurity has gender-specific implications: girls are disproportionately affected, often facing barriers to education due to safety issues, pressures of early marriage, and strategies for family survival (Magaji, 2008), while boys may face increased risk of forced recruitment by armed factions (Fayemi & Oladipo, 2020). This situation worsens existing inequalities and hampers efforts towards inclusive development.

Despite an increasing acknowledgement of the connection between education and insecurity, there is a notable lack of empirical research that focuses specifically on local contexts, such as Chikun LGA. Much of the current literature tends to examine northern Nigeria or the country as a whole, frequently neglecting the intricacies of community dynamics (Onah & Eze, 2021). Nevertheless, evidence that is sensitive to context is crucial for guiding targeted interventions from governments, development partners, and civil society organisations. This study, therefore, investigates the extent to which conflict and violence have disrupted access to education and attendance in Chikun Local Government, Kaduna State. By producing localised evidence, the paper aims to enhance the broader dialogue on education in conflict settings while providing actionable insights for policy interventions and strategies to promote resilience.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Definitions

Conflict and Violence

Conflict is a complex concept typically regarded as a struggle between individuals, groups, or institutions over values, resources, or power, wherein one party's objectives are perceived as incompatible with those of another (Coser, 1956; Galtung, 1969). In a broader context, conflict is not inherently harmful; it can ignite change and transformation. Nevertheless, when mishandled or exacerbated by structural inequalities, it often escalates into violence (Zailani, Magaji, & Jafaru, 2025). Violence

denotes the intentional application of force or power, either threatened or actual, leading to or likely resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, or deprivation (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2002). Within educational frameworks, violence is expressed through intentional attacks on schools, abductions of students, assaults on educators, and the destruction of educational facilities. Such acts are increasingly being recorded as strategic moves by violent organisations aimed at destabilising communities and hindering social progress (UNESCO, 2022; Olanrewaju & Okorie, 2020).

In Nigeria, events like the kidnapping of the Chibok schoolgirls in Borno State in 2014 and the abduction of Bethel Baptist High School students in Chikun, Kaduna State, in 2021 exemplify how violence intentionally targets educational environments, cultivating a climate of fear that disrupts both attendance and learning (Amnesty International, 2021). Thus, in unstable settings, conflict and violence present not only humanitarian crises but also fundamental challenges to the development of human capital.

Educational Disruptions

Educational disruption refers to any interruption, cessation, or destabilisation of formal learning activities. This disruption can be short-lived, such as temporary school closures due to security threats, or long-lasting, as observed in ongoing conflicts that displace children from schooling for extended periods (UNICEF, 2021). Educational disruptions manifest in various interconnected forms. One significant example is absenteeism (Gabdo, Magaji, & Yakubu, 2025), where children frequently miss school owing to insecurity or fear of attacks. This leads to learning deficiencies and diminishes student performance over time, as extended absences often culminate in eventual dropout.

Another disruption is the decrease in student enrollment, as numerous parents opt to withdraw their children from school entirely (Lamiya, Magaji, & Yakubu, 2025). This pattern is particularly evident among girls, as parents are concerned about their safety in regions affected by kidnappings and violence. Consequently, this leads to a growing gender disparity in education.

School closures also play a significant role in interrupting the learning process. In areas with high risk, governments frequently shut down schools to safeguard students and staff. While this may avert immediate danger, it leaves children without organised learning opportunities for extended periods.

Moreover, the decline in teaching quality further aggravates the situation (Musa, Magaji & Jafaru, 2024). Numerous educators escape insecure regions or refuse assignments in conflict-ridden areas, resulting in understaffed and inadequately resourced schools. Those who remain often teach under constant anxiety, which hampers their ability to instruct effectively and assist students.

Research shows that extended disruptions lead to learning loss, higher dropout rates, and increased risks of child labour and trafficking (Obehi, Magaji, & Ahmad, 2024) and encourage early marriage (Burdett, 2020; Edeh & Ojo, 2022). Continuous school closures associated with banditry and kidnappings have caused significant educational backlogs, fostering child labour and trafficking (Yunusa et al, 2024) and decreasing the chances of children returning to school after prolonged absences.

Insecurity in Northern Nigeria

Insecurity in northern Nigeria is a multifaceted issue influenced by insurgency, terrorism, communal violence, and, more recently, extensive armed banditry. Although the Boko Haram insurgency has predominantly impacted the northeast, the

northwestern states such as Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara have been troubled by criminal bandit groups that partake in mass kidnappings, cattle rustling, and violent attacks (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019). These violent conditions have compelled many households into displacement camps or urban areas, where education is frequently sidelined in favour of survival.

Kaduna State has been identified as one of the most unstable areas in terms of insecurity in northwestern Nigeria. Reports reveal that from 2020 to 2022, numerous schools were closed due to security risks, resulting in thousands of children either dropping out or being unable to enrol in school (Kaduna State Ministry of Education, 2022). The situation in Chikun LGA reflects this broader trend, where insecurity has systematically hindered access to education, widened the rural-urban gap, and perpetuated cycles of poverty and vulnerability (Enaberue, Musa, & Magaji, 2024).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Human Security Theory

The Human Security framework, popularised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994), shifts the focus of security from states to individuals. It highlights “freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live in dignity.” In terms of education, human security underscores that the safety and well-being of children are critical prerequisites for learning. Where insecurity prevails, children and their families face increased risks of violence, displacement, and trauma that directly undermine their educational rights. By applying Human Security Theory to the context of Chikun LGA, the study demonstrates that insecurity is not solely a military or political issue, but also a developmental concern that denies children their right to education.

Conflict Theory

Conflict Theory, rooted in Karl Marx’s analysis of class struggle, posits that structural inequalities within society give rise to tensions that often escalate into conflict (Onah & Eze, 2021). Competition for scarce resources, such as land, employment, and political representation, can create grievances that escalate into violence (Yakubu, Magaji, & Magaji, 2025). In northern Nigeria, historical marginalisation, poverty (Jafaru, Magaji, & Abdullahi, 2024), and insufficient state presence have contributed to violent uprisings and criminal behaviours (Magaji, 2007). In Chikun LGA, struggles over land access, combined with a lack of adequate state capacity to maintain security, have created a favourable environment for armed banditry. This situation disrupts education as schools become hazardous, perpetuating cycles of inequality. Conflict Theory provides insight into the underlying reasons for insecurity and its cascading effects on education.

Resilience Theory centres on the ability of individuals, families, and communities to endure, adapt to, and recover from shocks and pressures (Ungar, 2011). In educational settings affected by conflict, resilience is evident in how families and schools adjust to continue learning amidst insecurity. Examples of this include homeschooling, the creation of informal community learning centres, relying on religious groups for basic literacy, and utilising radio-based educational programs. In Chikun LGA, such strategies are observable, as communities that are unable to reach formal schools develop coping mechanisms to mitigate learning loss. Although resilience cannot replace the responsibilities of the state, this framework highlights the capacity of communities to manage adversity.

2.3 Empirical Evidence

Research from global, regional, and national levels consistently shows that conflict and violence severely undermine education. The most immediate impacts include damage to infrastructure, forced school closures, student displacement, and increased risks for both teachers and students. However, the long-term consequences extend to generational poverty, psychological trauma, and diminished state ability to foster human capital development (Burdett, 2020; UNESCO, 2022).

Global Evidence

Countries caught in prolonged conflict globally suffer significant educational interruptions. The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA, 2020) reported over 11,000 attacks on educational institutions between 2015 and 2019 across 93 countries, impacting more than 22,000 students and educators. In South Sudan, the ongoing civil war resulted in the closure of one-third of its schools, displacing millions of children and teachers (Burdett, 2020). Similarly, in Afghanistan and Syria, systematic assaults on schools have been documented as intentional tactics by insurgents to destabilise societies and undermine state legitimacy (Gladwell, 2019). These observations underscore that education is not simply collateral damage in warfare but frequently a targeted domain during violent conflicts

African Context

In Africa, educational disruptions caused by conflict are particularly severe in fragile states. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, ongoing violence in eastern regions has led to the destruction of schools and a significant drop in primary education enrollment (Charman, 2018). In Somalia, insecurity and displacement have left over 3 million children out of school, with rural and conflict-affected areas being disproportionately impacted (UNICEF, 2021). Gender disparities are also pronounced in conflict-stricken African nations, as families often place a higher priority on boys' education, withdrawing girls due to perceived safety concerns and cultural influences (Winthrop & Matsui, 2019).

Nigerian Context

Nigeria has become one of the countries most affected by attacks on education. UNESCO (2022) estimates that more than 13 million children are out of school, making it the highest number globally, with insecurity identified as a primary factor. The Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast has systematically targeted educational institutions, exemplified by the 2014 kidnapping of over 270 schoolgirls in Chibok, Borno State. Recent surges of armed banditry in northwestern states, such as Kaduna, Zamfara, and Katsina, have exacerbated the crisis through mass kidnappings of students and teachers.

Okoli and Ugwu (2019) found that repeated assaults on schools in northern Nigeria increased parental anxiety, resulting in mass withdrawals of their children from formal education. Likewise, Olanrewaju and Okorie (2020) found that families displaced by violence had to prioritise food and security over education, often making schooling a secondary concern. Edeh and Ojo (2022) highlighted that insecurity not only diminished attendance rates but also strained the supply of teachers, as educators abandoned schools deemed unsafe.

Gendered Impacts

Gender inequalities continue to play a crucial role in the dynamics between conflict and education. Fayemi and Oladipo (2020) found that in conflict-impacted communities in Nigeria, girls are removed from school at an earlier age due to concerns about safety, pressures for early marriage, and the necessity to contribute to family survival. UNICEF

(2021) supports this finding, indicating that girls are twice as likely to be permanently out of school after extended closures, while boys often engage in child labour or face forced recruitment into armed groups. This dual vulnerability underscores the broader gendered aspect of educational insecurity.

Kaduna State and Local Evidence

Located in the northwestern region of Nigeria, Kaduna State has emerged as a centre of insecurity, particularly due to armed banditry. The kidnapping of more than 100 students from Bethel Baptist High School in Chikun Local Government Area in 2021 attracted international attention to the risks facing schools in the state (Amnesty International, 2021). The Kaduna State Ministry of Education (2022) reported that between 2020 and 2022, numerous schools were closed because of insecurity, resulting in over 30,000 children being unable to attend school. These closures were especially prevalent in rural LGAs, with Chikun, Birnin Gwari, and Giwa being among the worst affected.

Despite these statistics, localised empirical research remains limited. Onah and Eze (2021) argue that much of the research on education and conflict in Nigeria tends to adopt a macro-level perspective, often overlooking the nuanced realities of specific communities. However, evidence gathered from micro-level contexts is essential for crafting effective interventions, as local differences in geography, culture, and community resilience strategies significantly influence educational outcomes. Chikun LGA serves as a pertinent case study: beyond the notable kidnappings, ongoing displacement, concerns among parents, and insufficient school security measures have intensified barriers to education.

Synthesis

When combined, empirical findings present a clear trend: conflict directly destabilises education by harming infrastructure, displacing students, and creating an atmosphere of fear that deters attendance. The evidence also suggests secondary consequences, including shortages of teachers, widening gender disparities, and a gradual decline in human capital. Nevertheless, a significant shortcoming exists in the form of localised studies that yield insights specific to communities. By focusing on Chikun LGA, this research aims to bridge the gap by providing empirical data at the micro level, thereby enriching academic discussions and policy initiatives aimed at addressing educational disruptions in conflict-affected areas within Kaduna State.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This research employs a mixed-methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how insecurity impacts school attendance. The quantitative segment involved a household survey designed to systematically collect data on school enrollment, attendance trends, and the socio-demographic profiles of affected families. This was supplemented by a qualitative element, which included semi-structured interviews with educators, parents, community leaders, and educational authorities. The justification for employing these combined methodologies rests on the acknowledgement that while quantitative analysis unveils measurable trends and relationships, qualitative accounts provide contextual richness and insights into the real-life experiences of communities facing conflict and violence. By integrating these data sources, the study enhances the validity and reliability of its conclusions, ensuring they encompass both statistical trends and grounded human experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

3.2 Study Area

The research was conducted in the Chikun Local Government Area (LGA) of Kaduna State, located in Nigeria's northwestern geopolitical zone. Recent estimates suggest that Chikun has a population of around 368,250 people (NBS, 2022). The region has been significantly impacted by insecurity, with frequent incidents of armed banditry, mass kidnappings, and communal conflicts disturbing everyday life and jeopardising educational stability. Chikun's position within the larger framework of Kaduna State, which has recorded some of the highest instances of school-related violence in Nigeria, makes it a relevant subject for investigating how such violence impacts educational access and attendance. Moreover, the range of rural and peri-urban areas in Chikun offers an opportunity to explore how the consequences of insecurity vary across different community contexts within a single Local Government Area (LGA).

3.3 Sampling and Data Collection

A multi-stage sampling strategy was employed to ensure a representative sample. For the quantitative survey, 300 households were chosen randomly from four wards within Chikun LGA. Structured questionnaires were distributed to either household heads or primary caregivers to gather socio-demographic data, including age, gender, income, and educational background, as well as detailed information on school enrollment, attendance records, and household views on insecurity.

The qualitative aspect included 20 key informant interviews with individuals selected for their relevant roles and experiences. This group comprised teachers, community leaders, parents, and officials from the Kaduna State Ministry of Education. The purpose of the interviews was to gather insights into how insecurity affects decisions regarding education, the coping mechanisms adopted by households, and the challenges and risks faced by educators.

In addition, secondary data sources were reviewed to supplement the primary data. Reports from UNICEF, the Kaduna State Ministry of Education, and pertinent security agencies provided foundational statistics on school closures, abductions, and government actions in the educational sector. These documents enhanced the analysis by placing local findings in the context of state and national patterns.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected from the household survey were analysed using descriptive statistics to uncover attendance rates, dropout trends, and differences across gender and income levels. Logistic regression analysis was subsequently utilised to investigate the correlation between socio-economic factors—such as household income, parental education, and proximity to conflict areas—and the probability of school attendance. This statistical modelling enabled a more thorough examination of the factors influencing whether children continue their education in the face of insecurity.

Qualitative data from the interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis. An inductive approach was used to identify recurring themes and categories, including parental fear, coping mechanisms, the effects of displacement, and the gender-specific aspects of educational disruption. The combination of quantitative and qualitative findings enabled triangulation, ensuring that numerical trends were contextualised within the respondents' experiences. This integration provided a more profound understanding of how insecurity impacts not only attendance patterns but also the decision-making processes at both household and community levels concerning education.

4. Data Presentation and Results

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male (Household Head)	68%
	Female (Household Head)	32%
Education Level of Parents	No Formal (40%), Primary (32%), Secondary (18%), Tertiary (10%)	
Household Income (Monthly)	<₦20,000 (45%), ₦20,000–₦50,000 (35%), >₦50,000 (20%)	
Household Size	1–4 (25%), 5–7 (46%), 8+ (29%)	

The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants in Chikun Local Government Area (LGA) offer essential insights into the complexities of conflict and its impact on education. The results of the survey indicated that males headed 68% of the households, while females headed 32%. This indicates that, although male heads are predominant, a notable number of households are led by females, often due to circumstances such as widowhood, displacement, or the absence of men caused by migration or death related to conflict. Such a gender distribution in household leadership affects decision-making regarding education because female-headed households frequently experience greater economic and social vulnerability (Fapohunda, 2019).

Regarding parental education levels, 40% of the participants had no formal education, 32% had completed primary education, 18% had finished secondary school, and only 10% held tertiary qualifications. This uneven distribution highlights the limited educational levels among parents, which not only shapes the socioeconomic environment of households but also impacts their children's education. Research consistently indicates that parents with higher educational attainment are more likely to invest in their children's education, even in the face of insecurity (Ezirim & Okonkwo, 2021).

In terms of income within households, 45% of participants reported earning below ₦20,000 per month, 35% earned between ₦20,000 and ₦50,000, while 20% stated an income exceeding ₦50,000. This suggests a significant incidence of poverty in the area, reflecting wider poverty patterns in northern Nigeria, where insecurity has intensified economic difficulties (World Bank, 2022). The distribution of household sizes showed that 25% of households had between one and four members, 46% comprised five to seven members, and 29% had eight or more members. Larger household sizes often lead to greater pressure on available resources, potentially compelling families to prioritise basic survival over educational expenditures.

The findings clearly illustrated the effect of insecurity on education. Approximately 58% of households reported that at least one child had dropped out of school due to security concerns. This trend of dropping out was primarily motivated by concerns about safety

and fear, rather than a lack of interest in education. An alarming 72% of participants identified fear of kidnapping as the primary reason for irregular school attendance. The increase in abductions in northern Nigeria, particularly those targeting educational institutions, has created widespread anxiety among both parents and students, hindering regular participation in schooling (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

Moreover, 65% of households reported that schools in their area were closed for at least one academic term between 2021 and 2023 due to security issues. Extended school closures disrupted the continuity of education and resulted in learning deficits, particularly affecting children from low-income families who lacked alternative educational options. The circumstances in Chikun LGA reflect national trends across Nigeria, where UNICEF (2021) estimates indicate that over 10 million children are out of school, with insecurity being a significant contributing factor.

4.3 Logistic Regression Results

Dependent Variable: Child School Attendance (1 = Attends regularly, 0 = Does not)

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	p-value	Odds Ratio
Household Income	0.85	0.002	2.3
Parent Education Level	0.74	0.010	2.1
Proximity to Conflict Zone	-0.92	0.001	0.40
Gender of Child (Male=1, Female=0)	0.33	0.080	1.39

To statistically evaluate the factors that affect school attendance, a logistic regression analysis was employed, with child school attendance serving as the dependent variable (1 = attends regularly, 0 = does not attend). The results revealed that household income ($\beta = 0.85$, $p = 0.002$, Odds Ratio = 2.3) significantly increased the odds of regular school attendance. This indicates that children from families with higher incomes were more than twice as likely to attend school consistently compared to those from lower-income families. Additionally, the education level of parents ($\beta = 0.74$, $p = 0.010$, Odds Ratio = 2.1) also had a positive and significant influence, suggesting that well-educated parents are more likely to ensure their children participate consistently in school, even in the face of insecurity.

In contrast, proximity to conflict zones had a considerable negative impact ($\beta = -0.92$, $p = 0.001$, Odds Ratio = 0.40). Families located nearer to areas of active conflict were approximately 60% less likely to have children attending school regularly. This underscores the important role of safety and location in shaping educational outcomes during conflict. The gender of the child ($\beta = 0.33$, $p = 0.080$, Odds Ratio = 1.39) showed marginal significance at the 10% level, suggesting that boys had a somewhat higher likelihood of attending school compared to girls. This reflects the gender-specific vulnerabilities in educational access during conflict, where girls are more prone to being removed from school due to cultural concerns and an increased risk of sexual violence (UNESCO, 2022).

Qualitative insights from parents and community members offered a deeper understanding of the experiences underlying the quantitative findings. Numerous parents voiced that fear and trauma played a crucial role in their decisions to take their children out of school. Several individuals recounted how ongoing kidnappings, particularly those aimed at schools, left families traumatised and hesitant to put their children at risk for the sake of education. For instance, one mother recalled that

following a series of kidnappings in neighbouring areas, she decided to stop sending her daughters to school due to safety and future well-being concerns.

In response to extended school closures and insecurity, some communities developed coping mechanisms by organising informal “home-schooling groups.” Local teachers volunteered to educate small groups of children in either households or community centres. Although these initiatives demonstrated resilience and community unity, they remained inadequate alternatives to formal education, lacking structured curricula, sufficient resources, and government backing.

The gendered effects were also apparent in the findings. Parents were more likely to withdraw girls from school than boys, reflecting both safety worries and cultural beliefs that prioritise boys’ education in times of crisis. Girls were frequently kept at home to mitigate the dangers of sexual violence or forced marriage, further entrenching existing gender inequalities in educational access. This aligns with global research indicating that conflict disproportionately harms girls’ opportunities for education, putting them at greater risk of long-term exclusion from schooling (UNICEF, 2021).

The results of this research confirm that insecurity has significantly disrupted educational access in Chikun LGA. The reported dropout rates, irregular attendance, and extended school closures correspond with previous findings throughout northern Nigeria (Olanrewaju & Okorie, 2020; Fayemi & Oladipo, 2020). The regression analysis emphasises the protective role of parental income and education, suggesting that wealthier, more educated families are better able to protect their children from educational disruptions. This conclusion aligns with the broader literature that recognises socioeconomic status as a vital factor in educational resilience within conflict-affected regions (Ezirim & Okonkwo, 2021).

The significant adverse effects of being close to conflict zones underscore the critical role of geographical safety in ensuring educational continuity. This aligns with UNESCO (2022), which noted that schools situated in “red zones” throughout Nigeria were either deserted, converted into military bases, or permanently shut down. These geographical variations in school safety exacerbate educational inequality, especially disadvantaging children residing in rural and conflict-affected areas.

The qualitative insights reveal how parents and communities are coping with insecurity. While informal home-schooling networks offered temporary relief, they are unable to fully substitute the structured environment and resources provided by formal education. These findings underscore the need for innovative educational strategies that strike a balance between safety and learning, such as community-based safe schools and mobile learning approaches.

Lastly, the identified gender disparities in this research reflect global evidence indicating that girls face the most significant impacts of educational interruptions in conflict situations (UNICEF, 2021). To address this issue, focused policies are needed to safeguard girls’ education during crises, incorporating psychosocial support, gender-sensitive safe school programs, and community awareness initiatives.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

This research has clearly shown that insecurity in Chikun Local Government Area (LGA) of Kaduna State has significantly disrupted educational outcomes. The results indicate that ongoing insecurity—particularly armed robbery, kidnappings, and general

violence—has led to prolonged absenteeism, heightened dropout rates, and, in some instances, the complete shutdown of schools. The analysis further established that factors such as household income, parental education, and geographical location play important roles in determining whether children continue their education despite these challenges. Families in more rural and violence-prone regions are particularly susceptible, as the combination of economic difficulties and physical insecurity increases the risk of educational exclusion.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching. Education serves as a crucial pathway for breaking the cycles of poverty and insecurity; however, in Chikun LGA, insecurity has undermined many of the advancements made in enhancing access to education. Children are not only missing immediate learning opportunities but also long-term prospects for social mobility and personal growth. In addition, the displacement of families and the psychological distress from kidnappings and violence have created enduring trauma that extends beyond the classroom. Without prompt action, the disruption of education could have cross-generational effects on human capital development in Kaduna State and Nigeria as a whole.

To tackle these challenges, the research recommends a multi-faceted policy approach. First, ensuring school safety must be a priority by reinforcing community-based security measures. This necessitates closer cooperation between formal security forces and local vigilante groups to provide protective coverage for schools, particularly in rural and high-risk areas. Second, alternative educational models should be considered to guarantee educational continuity in regions where safety is compromised. Initiatives such as mobile schools, temporary community learning centres, and digital learning platforms can provide flexible options for children who are unable to access formal classrooms.

Moreover, it is essential to provide psychosocial support for both students and educators. The exposure to violence and abductions has inflicted significant psychological trauma, and without adequate counselling services, those affected may find it difficult to reintegrate into the educational system. Special focus should also be given to girls, who are at an increased risk of dropping out of school due to safety concerns and domestic responsibilities. Scholarship programs, secure learning environments, and specialised mentoring initiatives can be vital in keeping girls enrolled in school.

Ultimately, strengthening household resilience is crucial. Families facing economic challenges often prioritise immediate survival needs, such as food and shelter, over education. Expanding social protection programs, including conditional cash transfers and livelihood support initiatives, would alleviate this economic burden and enable families to maintain their children's school enrollment despite the prevailing insecurity. In summary, the situation in Chikun LGA illustrates the severe impact of insecurity on education, while also highlighting potential avenues for resilience. By integrating enhanced security measures, creative educational delivery methods, psychosocial support, gender-responsive approaches, and family assistance, it is feasible to protect education in areas affected by conflict. Making certain that children can receive safe, uninterrupted, and equitable education despite insecurity is not just a local priority, but also a national imperative for sustainable development.

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